THE
MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke*

No. 1 July 1958 New Series Vol. II

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Lambeth

The Lambeth Fathers have never had such an opportunity of showing the mettle of their valour as now, when a whole world-ful of problems confronts the spiritual leaders of mankind. The publication beforehand of the reports upon which they will base their deliberations has been a valuable innovation. At least there has been an airing of the issues they will deal with, and they have had a certain opportunity of sampling public opinion.

One of the best of these reports is that dealing with the family. It boldly recommends that the Church should abandon its previous caution in the matter of birth control and family planning and should make a positive recommendation to cope with the new Malthusianism. More surprisingly, it pleads for a mitigation of the Church's severity against African converts with their plurality of wives. Rigidity in this matter is doing more harm than good, as it usually does.

Another valuable report has as its subject the commemoration of the heroes and martyrs of the Church. It really is anomalous that we should continue including in our calendar all kinds of little-known and forgotten saints when men of greatness whose names mean much in the modern world are left without mention. We need only think of such characters as Wilberforce, Shaftesbury, Henry Martyn, Bishop Hannington and many others of similar calibre. Commemoration of such men would be more than a pretty foible. It would exalt the kind of character the Church believes should be held up for emulation.

On Prayer Book revision we need not expect revolutionary decisions. The point at issue is whether, in developing their worship independently,

CHURCH DIVINITY SCHOOL of the PACIFIC LIBRARY

v.2.
1958/
59

the constituent parts of the Anglican Communion will not imperceptibly drift apart until one day the whole system crumbles. It is thought we need assurance that the main principles of development should be generally accepted so that we still remain outwardly the same Church.

But we may reasonably doubt whether uniformity in worship is so great and essential a bond of unity as is normally supposed. The natural expectation would be that churches in different regions would develop their own services out of their historic cultures, and should be encouraged to do so. The bond of unity in Anglicanism should be the same as that in Ecumenism; devotion to the Person of our Lord as the showing forth of the whole meaning of life. In comparison with that, the outward forms of the Prayer Book are a very frail bond.

What the public will expect from Lambeth is some clear statement on international affairs. The Bishops should not let them down on this question. There is, unfortunately, no gainsaying that since the Commission's report on the atom-bomb, shortly after the events of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Anglican authorities have tended to shirk the issue. This is understandable because intellect boggles at the sheer magnitude of the problem, and ecclesiastics can hardly expect to be expert on the technicalities involved. Yet, if the grace of God is the power in our lives that we claim it to be, it should enable us to rise great enough to obtain the mastery over the question. It is useless for the Church to set itself up as the moral and spiritual guide of mankind and then fold up at the moment of profoundest perplexity. This is defeatism in the spiritual sphere which is a temptation to be scorned and transcended.

The Church of Scotland

By 357 votes to 328 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland decided to send back the Report on Inter-Church Relations for further discussion by the presbyteries, after listening for five hours to a critical debate which brought to a head the controversy that has been raging north of the Border on the question of episcopal government.

It was an interesting coincidence that the General Assembly should have debated the report on relations with the Church of England at the same session as that in which it debated the question of the re-marriage of the divorced. Not long afterwards the marriage controversy was raised again in England by the Bishop of Ripon, as if to give point to the thoughts of the Scottish churchmen.

Quick to seize on any inconsistency or hypocrisy, the Press could not be expected to overlook the astonishing ineptitude of the Bishop of Ripon, first in ordaining a young man while still on probation for an offence against a boy and then excommunicating for six months and forbidding to take part in any voluntary church work a couple who were re-marrying after the breakdown of a previous marriage. In the first case, the Bishop

was throwing the young man, as a curate, into a situation of maximum temptation before he had proved himself to the satisfaction of the Courts, which is what 'probation' means. In the second, he was depriving a man and woman of the means of grace and the Church of their work at a time when they were trying to reconstruct their lives on new foundations after a catastrophe. In forbidding participation in church work he was acting entirely on his own authority. He himself acknowledged that the man and his partner were good people who had proved themselves in their service to the Church. Ecclesiastical folly and prejudice could hardly go deeper. The vicar of the parish concerned, the man who best knew the circumstances, apparently had no voice in the decision, which was the Bishop's alone.

When members of the General Assembly raised objections to the episcopal form of government, it may well have been this kind of behaviour on the part of bishops that they had in mind. It is soothing for churchmen in England to imagine that they were governed by memories of a dead and distant past; but that should not too readily be taken for granted. In their own discussions of the marriage problem, they were considering re-marriage for the guilty as well as the innocent party in a divorce; extending instead of reducing the charity of the Church. The question as to where discretion is to lie they have clearly faced. It must be the responsibility of the man who is pastorally responsible. The bishop in his remoteness from the scene can act as irresponsibly in the matter as he chooses: the local minister must live among the people. The necessity of adverse decision may sometimes be difficult for him, but a man fit for the work is supposed to be man enough to face these difficulties.

Well might a member of the General Assembly remark that whereas the Roman Catholics were treated as children and Anglicans as adolescents, in the Church of Scotland they were adult, having put away childish things at the Reformation. There is a bitter truth behind this. Not the least objection to the Anglican system is that if a bishop acts foolishly his folly runs through several hundreds of parishes. When a minister acts foolishly only one parish is affected. That principle is now being accepted both in government and industry. The theorists of administration have had to recognize that the centralization of authority and power has been a grievous mistake; that whenever error or maladjustment appears at the base of a great institution it has almost invariably begun wtih some undetected blunder at the top and that the only answer is the maximum devolution of authority to the lowest grades. The Church is lagging behind the best current practice in persisting with the concentration of authority in episcopal hands.

It is noteworthy that, in the General Assembly debate, there was little reference to the theology of the question. Practice alone seemed to be at stake. But while we can understand and sympathize with their fears,

336806

we still believe that they should take their courage in both hands for the sake of unity and have confidence that the admixture of the Presbyterian with the episcopal form of government would mitigate the ills of both and provide something nearer the ideal.

Archbishop Makarios

The invitation sent by the Archbishop of Canterbury to Archbishop Makarios to participate in the Lambeth Conference has raised justifiable protests. It seems to us that Dr. Fisher, faced with an extremely difficult problem, may have made the wrong decision. On the one hand, we must never lose sight of the long-term objective of the Anglican Communion, the furthering of Christian unity through doctrinal comprehension, through friendship and love, and through practical co-operation. The steady improvement in the relations between the Anglican and Orthodox Communions since the First World War is an achievement, and its pursuit is worth great sacrifices. It might well have been a severe blow to inflict an open snub on the autocephalous Church in Cyprus. But against this there is the personality of Makarios. His writings leave no doubt as to his moral responsibility for E.O.K.A. and its methods. His own clergy have been among E.O.K.A.'s victims, and yet he has never denounced the violence of his supporters. Granted, as one must, the part played by Orthodox clergy in the various phases of the struggle for Greek independence during the nineteenth century, there is a limit to crimes which can be sanctioned in the name of nationalism. To judge from the rising feud between Right and Left among the Greek Cypriots themselves, that limit has long since been reached. And still Makarios is silent. That being the case, it might have been better to let Cypriot Orthodoxy be represented by a bishop a little more vocal and whose hands are less stained with human blood. A refusal would have been worth risking, for after all, Orthodox bishops from other parts of the globe know their Makarios as well as we do.

Fundamentalism

It is not always that a University Sermon produces an outstanding message. On 2nd March, however, the Principal of Ridley Hall, Rev. C. W. J. Bowles, addressed a more than usually full congregation at Great St. Mary's on the subject of Fundamentalism. It turned out to be one of the more important occasions of the academic year. The full text has been printed in the *Cambridge Review* of 8th March (pp. 443–447), and no more than the briefest summary can be attempted here. The feature of Mr. Bowles' presentation of the problem was a detailed comparison of biblical and ecclesiastical fundamentalism. Both 'offered authority, quick and sure, to a generation restless and insecure, and the security depended on standing firmly on the dogmatic basis'. But once

the *system* was accepted, a considerable amount of freedom was left to the individual. The leash could be a long one, though leash it remained. It was not, however, the particular corpus of doctrine, the special view of the Atonement on the one hand, the Incarnation and Apostolic Succession on the other, that made a man a fundamentalist. It was 'the properties which are common to them both, the infallibilist and exclusive way in which they hold their doctrines and their sectarian spirit and policy'. No fundamentalist was ready to say with St. Paul about those from whom he differs 'in every way, whatever the motive, Christ is proclaimed by them: and therein I rejoice'. There was no 'esteeming of your neighbours more highly than yourselves'. The distinguishing mark of fundamentalisms of all sorts were—'We have the truth of God, you have not; we are the Church of God, you are not; we have the grace of God, you have not. I have the guidance of God, you have not.'

As Mr. Bowles pointed out, 'God has put us in the position where none of us can make claims of this sort.' Infallible direction was not to be had from Bible or Church or Pope or individual communing with God. Truth tested through experience was not certainty, but what Luther defined as *fiducia* or confidence. Beyond that lay distortion of the truth and, it must be said, arrogance.

This analysis is particularly important as coming from the Principal of Ridley Hall, where Fundamentalism might be expected to enjoy a favourable repute. It is, however, a common experience that men who start their University careers as fundamentalists end by transforming their ill-founded dogmatism into a more mature conviction which gives full weight to the Christian experience of others. Ridley Hall exerts a powerful and beneficial influence in this direction.

To us it seems that the basis of the fundamentalist position is fear. It is the fear of new knowledge, of the challenge of our day, the fear of life itself. It is one of the symptoms of weakness in the Western world. It could mean ultimately the surrender of intellectual leadership to the less inhibited Communist scientists. Christianity to-day is facing a similar crisis to that which it faced during the third century. Could it or could it not assert its spiritual and intellectual leadership in an interested but potentially hostile world? Then, Origen provided the answer. To-day, who? Certainly not the fundamentalists. Scrolls and Sputniks are here to stay, with all the new problems with which they face the theologian. But equally, the answer is not an anti-fundamentalist crusade. It is to be hoped that one thing which the Lambeth Conference will achieve will be to tell all alike the place of the Bible in Christian faith and practice. And above all, we should remember that the Christian message was a liberating message, expanding man's vision of the divine. Love, not fear, was its essence—to-day as in times past.

Sunday Observance

The Times leader-writer expressed the feelings of most English people when he commented:

> If further proof were needed that our Sabbatarian laws are out of date, it is provided by this wretched business at Coventry. The wholly desirable project of giving a floodlit performance of *Les Sylphides* in the ruins of the cathedral has foundered on the rocks of legal objection, strengthened by yet another of these too familiar outbursts of extreme minority opinion. . . . Could ammunition have been more lavishly given to those who laugh at us for equating true religion with gloomy, Philistine taboo?

The Controversy over Sunday Observance and its significance arose, it will be remembered, out of the desire of Mr. Anton Dolin and his ballet company to offer artistry, skill and beauty to God by a performance of *Les Sylphides* in the ruins of the bombed cathedral of Coventry. Since Sunday was the only day free of other commitments, the performance was to be given on a Sunday evening and the proceeds of the charge for entrance were to assist in the building of the new cathedral. Whereupon that arch-Sabbatarian, Mr. Legerton (Secretary of the Lord's Day Observance Society), grubbed in the Statute Book for such ancient legislation as he could invoke to stop this effort. Inevitably, he found what he wanted and, with undisguised rejoicing, stopped it. For once, the Press of the country was almost unanimous. Contempt for this action was prompt and searing.

Fortunately the Bishop of Coventry has been able to arrange that the performance be given on television instead, and the fees for it will go to the object originally proposed. Mr. Legerton is left gnashing his teeth in the end. Righteousness prevails, as in the story books, and Mr. Anton Dolin and his company can make their dedication.

What is particularly interesting about the original project, however, is that when many of us are trying to devise means whereby the Church can once again speak to the people in understandable terms a ballet company should come along to associate themselves with traditional Christianity, simply by offering their artistry in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral. It is the kind of enterprise that could lead on to new expressions of worship even though this element might not be original to *Les Sylphides* itself. It may be compared with Father Geoffrey Beaumont's encouragement of the Folk Mass, in which the Holy Communion uses popular jazz music as its medium. Prejudices have been shocked by both, and it need not be doubted that many people would be glad if they could find legislation to stop Mr. Beaumont. But it can only be through spontaneous outbreaks of worship such as this that the Church will once again become a medium of communication between God and man.

It is hardly likely that the Liturgical Commission will originate, support or endorse such measures. Something more archaic or atavistic is

likely to suit it better. It is interesting to note that although this Commission includes several learned and liberal-minded men, it is composed almost entirely of antiquarians. It contains not a single artist, poet, dramatist or musician, although its subject is mainly art, poetry, drama and music.

Meanwhile there is the more general question of Sunday observance as it affects the lives of the nation generally. As *The Times* justly observed:

> To change the law in such matters is never easy for politicians, who see no votes in the enterprise and much wearisome lobbying. But it is the duty of Parliament to do away with handicaps to the full and reasonable expression of the spirit of the nation. Sunday as a special day is, indeed, a precious inheritance and one not likely to be abandoned. But the question to-day is how to preserve its essence, which has a positive quality, and that will not be done by a blind reiteration of negatives. The younger generation will not be persuaded to keep the commandments by those who shake a shocked finger at observances approved by most practising Christians at all stages of life. The juggler who, in his simplicity, performed his tricks before the altar taught a lesson which our strictest Sabbatarians would do well to take to heart.

Tammany at St. Helens

There have been some strange goings-on at St. Helens. In a letter to *The Times* of 1st May, Mr. Tom Driberg, Chairman of the Labour Party, had this to say about the short list of Labour candidates to fight the bye-election caused by Sir Hartley Shawcross's resignation:

> Of the six names on the short list, at least four, and probably five, are the names of Roman Catholics. So great a preponderance in favour of one denomination can hardly be due to mere coincidence; and if it is not due to coincidence it may be oversimplification to attribute the character of the short list exclusively to trades union prejudice against 'luminaries'. There were, in all, 19 nominees, including such able men as Mr. Norman Mackenzie and Mr. W. T. Rogers, as well as a number of union-sponsored nominees: it would be interesting to know how many of those not short-listed are not Roman Catholics.

Even more definite was Rev. V. L. Tucker Harvey, of Sutton Vicarage, St. Helens. He claimed that the selection of a short list of candidates was the culmination of a 'catholic action' campaign, and pointed to a warning, which appeared in a local paper, of a likely 'drop of 10,000 votes' for the Labour Party if people did not wake up to what was happening.

People did in fact wake up just in time, and the final choice of the local Labour Party was an Anglican. But the affair is a warning. One must never forget that power figures largely among the objectives of the Roman Church in this country—power exercised through the 'spiritual supervision' of a family, through the special education of children, and now through control of the local party caucus. This last is a sinister development, and as anyone who has had experience with Continental

(or American) politics knows, the harbinger of the corruption of political life. Tammany Hall is not wanted in this country. Feckless people who cheerfully hand over their mental and spiritual welfare to Rome must also reckon on handing their material welfare to the Irish immigrant politician—a less attractive proposition both to them and to the nation as a whole.

THE CHURCH IN BRITAIN AND ITS SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT*

By Rev. H. C. Snape, Vicar of Whalley

Canon Wickham and Mr. Rhodes have both in a different way attempted a task which has long needed to be taken in hand. As Mr. Rhodes points out, most of the reasons popularly given for the declining influence of religious institutions are superficial. But these institutions are part of the life of the community, and the habit of public worship has a social no less than a spiritual significance. Imitation and conformity are perhaps the two most powerful factors in the formation and development of a social tradition. It is therefore within the provenance of the sociologist to examine the influence of religious institutions in a community, and he is better equipped than the theologian to discover the causes of advancement or decay in religious influences. If he is himself a Christian he probably can indicate how these influences may be advanced. The report 'Towards the Conversion of England' would perhaps have borne some fruit if its findings had taken into consideration a sociological estimate of religious influences in England. Three years ago Will Herberg gave a sociologist's account of the religious life of America in *Protestant - Catholic - Jew*. Mr. Rhodes in *The New Church in a New Age* has performed a similar task for England, restricting his field, however, to the Established Church. Canon Wickham confines his investigations to Sheffield, but invites attention to the fortunes of both the Established Church and the Non-conformist Churches. While Mr. Rhodes' book is largely analytical, Canon Wickham's is for the most part historical: but the one supplements the other and both arrive at similar conclusions. Canon Wickham concludes his historical survey of the churches in Sheffield by saying, 'What is not a matter of conjecture is that the Church faces a missionary problem in the country as acute as anywhere in the world' (p. 213). It is this problem which Mr. Rhodes states and seeks to solve.

Both books are simple in outline. Mr. Rhodes, drawing from many sources as well as his own wide experience as the editor of a Church newspaper, presents the facts and bases upon them a diagnosis of the religious situation. He describes with singular impartiality the Church of England in action both at the centre and in the parishes. From his record it is plain that there is no lack of devotion and loyalty among both clergy and faithful laity, with a striving after administrative efficiency. This chapter takes up one-third of the book and is perhaps its most valuable part. It could well be published abroad, since we know of nothing else which

**The New Church in the New Age*, by C. O. Rhodes. (Herbert Jenkins; 21/-.)
Church and People in an Industrial City, by E. R. Wickham. (Lutterworth Press; 30/-.)

reveals so much of the Established Church to those outside it. It seems on that account unfortunate that such a disproportionate amount of space is devoted to an analysis of the personality of the present Archbishop of Canterbury. It may be that at the present juncture of the Church's affairs the Archbishop is forcibly impressing himself on the institution. That, however, does not mean that the Church is becoming an expression of his prejudices and vision; it rather implies a lack of will and purpose in the general body of the Church and a studied indifference on the part of the politicians in ecclesiastical affairs. Inevitably in these circumstances the man at the helm takes full charge, especially if he himself is possessed of gifts of administration. It is always difficult to estimate the influence of leaders upon the institutions which they serve: it is safe, however, to assume that the personality of the archbishops can do very little to arrest and has done nothing to accelerate the decline in the influence of the Church of England. Although William Temple was in his lifetime probably the most popular and widely-known primate the Church has ever had, yet his personality did nothing to stem the decline. Another chapter is devoted to the Church's attitude towards sexual relationships and marriage. It cannot be said that Mr. Rhodes has anything new to record here except to betray how the Church has appeared to follow rather than lead, and to reveal the present impasse into which it has fallen on the problem of the re-marriage of divorced persons in church.

Mr. Rhodes' thesis stands or falls, however, on his diagnosis of the situation and his suggestions as to how it can be redeemed. His diagnosis seems to contain two flaws. First of all he connects the decline of religious influences in England with a decline which he believes is happening all over the world. 'What we are witnessing,' he writes, 'at the present time, then, is not merely the defection of the English from traditional religion, but something like a universal defection. If it is apostasy, it is the apostasy of mankind' (p. 38). He admits that the reverse is true of America, but qualifies this exception by taking it as the proverbial swallow. But can a nation of 150 million be dismissed at one swallow? Also all those who have visited Russia in recent years report that the churches are well-attended both in town and country. This is in a country where a tyrannical government made an unsuccessful attempt to suppress public worship and where the open profession of religion disqualifies a man from the pursuit of a political career. Also, now that the Soviet state has existed for forty years, it can no longer be argued that the churches are only frequented by the old and the uneducated. The National Church of Canada is reported to be booming and hardly able to cope with the continuous stream of recruits. While Christianity has not captured the East yet, the churches there are exercising a lively influence, and the Church of South India has brought out a liturgy which has commanded admiration in the most unexpected quarters. What we are witnessing is not a

'universal defection' but the defection of Western Europe from Western Christianity, which Western Christians still regard as the only legitimate development of the Christianity of the New Testament. The questions which the present crisis seems to raise appear then to be rather different from those which Mr. Rhodes seeks to answer. First of all it must be asked: why is there this defection in Western Europe, compared with a resurgence of religion on the other side of the Atlantic and a lively interest in Christianity in the East where the soil is essentially alien, and the survival of the Christian religion in Russia where there has been a determined effort to suppress it? Secondly, it must be asked how, if it is not too late, these institutions which are the guardians of the Christian tradition in the West can transmit it, so that it can be for this and coming generations the source of faith and hope.

The other flaw in Mr. Rhodes' diagnosis would seem to be that he restricts his analysis to the influence of the Established Church. For a sociologist, the entity to be studied is a community and its religious institutions. Will Herberg in his study of American Church life adopted the division of Jew, Catholic, and Protestant. Here the natural division would be Anglican, Non-conformist, and Roman Catholic. Mr. Rhodes begins his analysis by pointing out that the greater part of the proletarian masses created by the Industrial Revolution have never been in the churches. Canon Wickham's facts and figures support this contention. One Church, however, derives its strength from the 'proletarian masses', i.e. the Church of Rome, just because, as Mr. Rhodes says, 'they, generally speaking, care little who rules, are incapable of excellence, pay a heavy price in suffering for the mere privilege of being permitted to live and are distinguished more by their acquiescence than their claims'. The fundamentalist and other dogmatic sects also for the same reasons derive most of their support from this section of the population. The problem, however, is social and political rather than religious. It may be pointed out that in America the aim of every member of the 'proletariat' is to become a good American, i.e. what the Marxist would call a 'petit bourgeois'. Consequently the Roman Church has become in a large degree Americanised as the immigrants have come into the middle income grades, and the notorious American sects derive their strength from the urban proletariat. It may be noticed that in this country, where the population of the new housing estates is composed of the new English middle-class of technicians and engineers, church life is strong: but where they have been filled with people displaced from derelict slums the churches find it difficult to make any impact. The strength of the traditional religious institutions of the West is derived from the middle and professional classes. Mr. Rhodes describes how the acids of criticism have weakened both Church and Bible as theological guides and so alienated the educated man from traditional beliefs. It is of course a familiar story, but Mr. Rhodes traces

the beginning of this defection back to the fourteenth century when William of Ockham divorced revelation from knowledge, philosophy from theology. William's speculations, however, were only symptomatic of a movement of the spirit which streamed from Christian belief itself. Primitive man regarded nature as his enemy to be feared, and his king as to be worshipped if not as a god at any rate as a semi-divine being. The risen Christ, Paul argued, had conquered the demons behind nature ever threatening man's peace. For the Jew it was not the king but God himself who reigned over his own nation. Paul divided the Jewish theocracy into two. Through the Church Christ was the Lord of men's spirits: the secular world of politics was evil but held in restraint by the earthly rulers, i.e. the Emperor as the unwitting instrument of God. When, however, the Emperor submitted to the Church he was acknowledged as the chosen agent of God under the spiritual rule of the Church to restrain evil. Furthermore, the truths of revelation were intellectually defended by the employment of formal logic as it had been inherited from Greece. Although the Roman empire guarded a cultured and civilized life, yet the theocratic imperialism of emperor and pope was very little removed from a primitive theocracy where fear of gods and kings permeated the whole of life. As Mr. Wren-Lewis has pointed out, the renaissance, the reformation, and the scientific revolution represented 'an extraordinary liberation of a whole society from a neurotic condition', which 'is to be understood in terms of the working-out in European history of that redemptive action, which Christianity claims took place in the life of Christ' (*Church of England Newspaper*, 25 April, 1958). The Protestant Churches of Europe, although their emergence was one of the fruits of this liberation, retained the conception of religion as the all-prevailing guardian of mankind in a world riddled with fear and perpetually threatened with chaos. The Bible interpreted in a variety of ways replaced the Church as the guardian of truth and morals: theology was still regarded as a dogmatic formal system, an eternal system representative of eternal objects. Henceforward the Churches seemed gradually to lose all power over the spirit of the age: both their theology and their ethics seemed to be timid, conventional, and lifeless. The business of theologians seemed to be to erect dams which were never able to contain the stream of human thought and discovery. Such is the standing of the Churches in this country to-day that Canon Wickham writes: 'The Church faces a missionary problem in the country as acute as anywhere in the world' (p. 213); while Mr. Rhodes writes, 'From one survey after another we learn that the majority of our countrymen are conscious of spiritual need, retain a vestigial belief in God and Christ, but are bored to death by the Church' (p. 65).

Both Canon Wickham and Mr. Rhodes offer tentative suggestions as to the solution of the Church's problem to which, as the latter says, 'there

is no facile solution and no final answer' (p. 195). Canon Wickham considers that a new theological perspective is the prime need. 'Christianity,' he writes, 'should provide a theological perspective, an understanding of the interests of the Kingdom, a knowledge of man's nature and destiny, basic values that should be reflected in men's social relationships . . . ' (p. 258). Mr. Rhodes emphasizes the social quality of the Christian religion and shows that where the clergy and laity set out by cultivating personal relationships with sympathy and understanding to build up a community, the fruits of religion seem to blossom again and the habit of public worship is recovered. 'The Church should be a fellowship,' he writes (p. 220). Mr. Rhodes, we believe, does here indicate the road to recovery. He points out that the failures of the direct attack by missions parochial and national (even when they use all the techniques of advertisement) prove that the Church is trying to bridge the gulf between itself and society by assuming that society is evil and perverse because it will not listen. 'The Church is trying to put something across a public that stands condemned in its eyes. It is trying to man-handle the populace into the Kingdom of God' (p. 219). This method is perhaps implied in Canon Wickham's statement that 'the Church faces a missionary problem as acute as anywhere in the world' (p. 213). Mr. Rhodes knows that these successful experiments in the creation of community by personal relationships are isolated; their success very largely depends on the personality of their leaders and accidents of environment. The Parish and People movement has met with failures as well as successes, and after all a readiness of men to worship anywhere but in a church signifies that the divorce between Church and people it not really annulled.

Mr. Rhodes' diagnosis and his prescription fall short in some measure by his sweeping statement (p. 38) that 'what we are witnessing . . . is a universal defection'. The boom in religion in America and the survival of religion in Russia repay investigation for the light they throw on the situation at home and the way it is to be met. The Russian Orthodox Church under the Czars was, according to Byzantine theory, the spiritual servant of a semi-divine being, the Czar. In fact it became the tool of irresponsible tyrants. Under the Soviet régime it has had to be left to provide the fruits of religion, i.e. a personal overbelief which supplements and enriches one's working beliefs, peace and consolation for those who find they need them. It is permitted to offer the mystic path to a consciousness of eternity, the reality of prayer and immortality. But it cannot make any moral, political or social pronouncements and it does not wish to do so. To us this does not appear to be the Christian religion of the New Testament. But after all, the early Church had to accommodate itself to a hostile pagan state. The pagan emperors persecuted; so did Stalin. Both failed to extinguish the Church. The emperor became the Church's patron: Stalin suffered the Church to survive as a spiritual agency. In a

different fashion the Churches in America flourish for the same reason. They have integrated themselves within the social and cultural framework of the republic, providing an overbelief which supplements the basic assumptions of the American way of life and frankly offering the spiritual gifts of peace and equilibrium. Mr. Rhodes sums up his own description of American religion as 'sanctified humanism that provides a remarkable answer to the major questions men ask of existence' (p. 38). The term 'humanism', which was once ennobling and associated with the laudatory epithet 'humane', has become for churchmen a term of abuse. The Report on the Conversion of England issued in 1945 called it 'the age-long lie'. If by sanctified humanism Mr. Rhodes means a belief that man is the measure for him of all things, but that in measuring all things he finds that there are things which he cannot measure save in terms of acceptance and worship, of fear and love, it would express my own assessment of American religion. But that also expresses the religion of One for whom the Sabbath was made for man and who destroyed the temple and built it again in three days. It is quite true that American religion has been secularized because it endeavours 'to deliver the goods' as a direct response to a demand. Americans have yet to learn that the true fruit of religion is a bye-product of single-minded humility. Both Russia and America demonstrate to Europe and particularly to us who are so closely connected with North America that our religious institutions must first concentrate on providing what the individual in modern society primarily needs from them, a workable belief in the transcendent, a technique of prayer and common worship which will bring forth the fruits of poise and inner peace of mind. As both Mr. Rhodes and Canon Wickham plead—unfortunately the latter confines his plea to the realm of theology—the Churches in Europe must, if they are to survive, repudiate the spirit of what Dr. Inge called Catholic imperialism and Tillich calls heteronomy. As new hopes and new duties come into sight, they must be accepted as the fruits of the Spirit and regarded with sympathy and understanding. Otherwise the pronouncements of the Churches are ignored or confidently condemned.

How can the Church of England become adapted to meet successfully the new situation which Mr. Rhodes shows is for it a crisis? Perhaps it might be more fruitful to take into account the situation of the Free Churches as well as that of the Establishment. Much of Canon Wickham's prescription remains vague because he uses the abstract term 'The Church'. 'I believe in the Holy Catholic Church,' said Archbishop Frederick Temple, 'but regret that it does not yet exist.' Here there is the Roman Catholic Church, the Established Church, and the Free Churches: none of them can be ignored in assessing the religious situation, as every parish priest knows. Liberals are prejudiced in favour of the establishment because it appears to guarantee freedom of prophesying under the

law. But the facts would justify the contention of both Bishop Henson and Monsignor Ronald Knox that since the Enabling Act of 1920 it has become a denomination. It is also a denomination largely dominated by a sacramentalist outlook which has only an eclectic appeal. As Canon Charles Smyth has written (*The Genius of the Church of England*, p. 31), 'Dating the Reformation 1535—1662, we may say that before it English piety, at its best, was mystical, and, after it, it was ethical: it has never been naturally sacramental.' As the Established Church it is ever tempted to dissipate its resources in maintaining what is essentially a façade, and to consume much of its energy in raising funds for a multitude of objects. How many parishes still survive possessing the full establishment of house and incumbent to administer weekly to a congregation of twenty to thirty persons! As the national Church it has multiplied its bishoprics with their full complement of administrative officials, with a cathedral which never seems to come to completion, and which has in its turn to have a capitular staff. As the national Church it has to conserve many ancient buildings. Furthermore, in spite of the reforms of the last forty years, its structure and spirit retain that feudal outlook which long survived in the countryside after the industrial revolution, and indeed only vanished in the last twenty years. The establishment of one Church as the Church of the nation has given to the other Protestant Churches an inferiority complex which dogs all their efforts. It is still true that the successful son of a Non-conformist becomes a churchman. The Non-conformist public schools have failed to provide the Free Churches with a sufficiency of leading ministers and laity. With their undistinguished buildings, ill-paid ministry and slender resources, they cannot help but be overshadowed by the Established Church whose income the Church Commissioners have so successfully augmented by skilful investment. Past disputes between the Established Church and the Free Churches have through the operation of the Temple-Cowper clause of the Education Act of 1870 created, what Disraeli foretold at the time would emerge, a unique denomination of people who would profess the Christian religion without practising any cultus. They of course form the majority of the nation. If the Free Churches are to recover their influence in the religious life of the community, some amendment to the present settlement concerning religious teaching in the national schools seems to be needed which will tie religious education to the worship of a Christian Church. The strength of the Free Churches lies in their capacity to provide a mystical and ethical religion which meets the needs of the average layman. For any attempt to meet the religious crisis in this country it is significant that the non-episcopal Churches both in the United States and in Canada are growing much more rapidly than their episcopal sisters. It is also noticeable that the Free Churches are making headway in our universities compared with the Established Church. 'Retrenchment,' writes Canon Wickham, 'a

reculer pour mieux sauter, is a temptation, but it is unrealistic in the national situation' (p. 273). It can only be replied that in commerce, when business declines, retrenchment and reconstruction become the order of the day with a concentration of resources at key-points. 'What is required is nothing less than over-all reform.' That may be nothing less than re-establishment, resulting not in the establishment of one Church but in the establishment of the Protestant religion. For obvious reasons it cannot, alas! be the establishment of the catholic faith.

Many years ago J. C. Hardwick enumerated the things needed for a vital religion in the following order of importance: (1) Purpose; (2) Community centred round the purpose; (3) Experience gained by following the achievement of the purpose; (4) the doctrine or theology resulting from experience as a guide for the future. If the Christian tradition is ever to recover its vigour, it must give a vision of life's purpose which can feed hope and faith. Copernicus and Darwin made shipwreck of the hope of heaven above: two wars have shattered the hope of the kingdom of God on earth. The desperate and tortuous efforts of academic theologians to make a reasonable eschatology from the biblical bits and pieces left by Schweitzer's criticism of liberal Protestantism have proved futile, as Mr. Rhodes shows (pp. 243-5). Schweitzer himself and the other Christian prophet of this century, Berdyaev, would seem to declare all that seems needful. It may be summed up as the enrichment of life to that degree where death is swallowed up in victory, which after all is a demonstrable fruit wherever the risen Christ reigns. The key-text is, 'I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly.' For the fulfilment of that hope community is essential. That is one of the secrets of the success of the American Churches. Men who have lost their European roots find that they 'belong' in them and at the same time they find themselves as persons in a society which does not demand from them conformity to something which is external to their inner selves. As Mr. Rhodes writes of a Christian community, 'For its prosperity this kind of fellowship does not require prophetic words but gracious lives' (p. 247). From experience in Churches animated by such hope will come the theology which will provide the perspective and slant desired by Canon Wickham. Hope reaches forward into speculation. A common error of the past has been to take the imagery of biblical speculation as certified predictions of coming events. A true theology will examine the speculations created by hope in the light of psychological discovery concerning unconscious desire and symbolism, and in the light of our knowledge of life and the world afforded to us by the sciences. This programme may sound large and bold. But Mr. Rhodes has thrown down a challenge which demands nothing less.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHRISTOLOGICAL QUESTION

By W. Norman Pittenger, S.T.D.,
Professor of Christian Apologetics, General Theological Seminary, New York

Definitions of Christianity, like definitions of the nature of religion in general, are legion. Personal experience, the particular Christian community of which one is a member, conditions and circumstances in one's own life, and many other factors, will so influence one's thinking that the definition of Christianity which we offer will to a large degree be a reflection of these things rather than an historical description. The special emphasis which we have learned by our own participation in the particular Christian body through which Christianity has been mediated to us will lead us to put the main stress in our definition on commitment in faith, or on growth in grace, or on the moral life, or on worship or devotion. But whatever may be the precise nature of our definition and however we may describe the Christian religion in terms of its pragmatic significance for us, one thing will remain constant. There will always be a reference to Jesus Christ as the central figure; he will always be the focal point in our definition.

In this sense there can be no doubt that Christianity, in all its forms, is christocentric. By this I do not mean to suggest that it lacks a theocentric emphasis, for it is apparent that *God* is ever the ultimate fact with which Christians, as indeed all others, have to deal. Yet for the Christian it is not God in abstraction, so to speak; it is God as apprehended in Jesus Christ with whom the Christian has to do. Thus Christ remains the supreme and central medium for our knowledge of God and for our understanding of human relations with God.

Furthermore, it may fairly be said that Christianity has never been content to make this continuing reference to Jesus Christ simply as the *Man Jesus*. There can be no doubt, of course, that the manhood of Christ is of vital importance. But it is the peculiar quality of the Christian faith that it has seen in that manhood an action of God—and an action of such intensity that the right understanding of who Jesus is has always included a reference to him as one who in some real sense can be described as 'divine'. We are not at the moment concerned to argue the nature of that 'divinity' which the Christian ages have ascribed to our Lord; we are concerned only to point out that in one way or another, with the use of terms which have varied from time to time and from Christian community to Christian community, this ascription of 'divinity' has remained constant in the Christian evaluation of him who is at the centre of the life of the whole body of Christian believers.

It is inevitable that there will be some Christians who will place more stress on the appeal to the rich and full humanity of Christ; they will find

that in the Jesus of history, as portrayed for us in the synoptic gospels, there is that which makes its special impact upon them. It is also inevitable that there will be some Christians who will place more stress on the appeal to the action of God in and through Christ; they will find that in the Christ of the Church's faith, beginning with the interpretation given in the Fourth Gospel, there is that which makes its special impact. Yet in the total life and experience of the whole Christian fellowship, there is a bringing-together of these two modes of understanding, so that it is neither Jesus only, as the true and perfect Man, nor the Christ of faith only, as the supreme action of God towards his human children, but the fact of *Jesus Christ*, the true Man in whom God dwells and through whom he acts, which constitutes the real and abiding centre of that life and experience.

For this reason, no genuine Christianity can be without a doctrine of the person of Christ—that is to say, without a Christology. For this reason, too, it is the Christological question—'What think ye of Christ?' —which is at the heart of the theological enterprise. Until that question has been considered and some answer given to it, the rest of theology must necessarily be in doubt. Whatever else may be right or wrong in Karl Barth's many-volumed *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, and however strange it may seem to begin his work with a trinitarian analysis, he is correct in saying that it is the affirmation of Christ as the revelation of God, the Word of God, which must be the starting-point for any theology that would claim the name of Christian. Or to take an instance very remote indeed from Barth's theology, the restatement of the Christian faith by the English and Anglican 'catholic modernist', the late Professor Bethune-Baker, takes the same point of departure, as a reading of the relevant chapters in *The Way of Modernism* and *The Faith of the Apostles' Creed* will demonstrate.

In fact one may say that both Dr. Barth and Professor Bethune-Baker are *too* christocentric in their approach and *too* christological in their theology, if one's criterion for judgment be the theology of St. Augustine or a St. Thomas Aquinas. For in both these classical Christian thinkers, as in the main stream of orthodox theology generally, it has not been forgotten that the Christian creeds *begin* with the declaration of faith in 'God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth', and *then* go on to affirm that it is in Jesus Christ that this God is certainly known and the right relationship with him made possible for men. But despite this shift, I am sure that Barth and Bethune-Baker are correct in their insistence that any *Christian* theology, even though it necessarily and naturally may begin with some treatment of the God who in Christ has so supremely declared himself, must find in the christological question the key to the whole theological structure. For otherwise, the theology would not be built upon the distinctively and specifically Christian *datum*, which surely

is nothing other than Jesus Christ himself, in the full reality of his person and his work.

Furthermore, it is the fact of 'salvation' through Christ which provides us with this *datum*. I do not believe that the historical record alone, simply as a matter of biographical interest, will be found sufficient to explain the christological enterprise. Nor do I think that a discussion of the *person* of Jesus Christ, in abstraction from his *work*, has ever been the concern of the Church's theologians. Be the christology never so 'high', it always has some reference to Christ in terms of *what he has done for men*; be it never so 'low', it always has been obliged to take into account, however inadequate that account may be, that which he is apprehended as having wrought for men and that which his deed has made available for their wholeness of life. In other words, any treatment of the person of Christ must of necessity rest back upon convictions about —and, indeed, experience of—his 'saving power'.

In this sense, soteriology is the essential pre-condition for any discussion of Christology. Even if we are not primarily concerned with the exceeding sinfulness of man, but only with the results—whatever they may be otherwise—of Christ's life, death, resurrection, ascension, and his session at the right hand of God, we can only get at the reason for Christian affirmations about *who* he *is* in terms of *what* he has *done*. I am frank to confess that I am a 'Scotist', believing that even had man not sinned, the Incarnation would yet have occurred, since God—in that magnificent consistency of purpose and constancy of operation of which the Jewish understanding of him, reflected in the Old Testament, is witness— would have crowned his creative work by the supreme creative act, so far as we men are concerned, in manifesting himself with a fullness, and energizing with a uniqueness, such as we Christians believe we see in our Lord Jesus Christ. But the fact is that we *are* sinners; hence the act of God in Christ is effectual for the salvation of men in the special sense of redemption from their sin, however we may conceive that redemption. Yet there is more to the Incarnation than that; and much of our contemporary theology has so concentrated on the specific soteriology as to lose sight of the wider implications and consequences of the coming among us of Jesus our Lord.

The question is, what do we mean by 'salvation'? If we confine the meaning of the term to our redemption from sin, then in my judgment we have denied or at least minimized such other aspects of the whole soteriological picture as are found in the Johannine testimony to the indwelling of Christ in his people, the participation in the divine life through his coming, and the lifting-up of man to a new level or new stage in the God-man relationship which becomes an achieved fact in our Lord and which is thus made a living possibility for those who respond to him

in faith and self-surrender. The soteriological pre-condition for Christology is broader and wider than much of our recent Christian theology would imply. 'Salvation' means, I am convinced, that wholeness of life, that integration, which comes through adjustment to God made known and available in the emergent life of our Lord. It is of course obvious that man is a sinner; we can never exaggerate the reality and the depth of man's sinfulness, his self-estrangement from God, and his arrogance and pride in that alienation. On the other hand, unless we insist equally upon the real grounding of man in the divine purpose, we fall into a view of man which makes him in fact incapable of redemption in any fashion which is not in fact magical. Classical theology has never failed to insist that man, despite his sin, is made in the 'image of God'. And the mainstream of theology has meant by that statement that man is undergirded by God and that in him even as sinner there is still sufficient of God's operation and sufficient reflection of God's true intention for man, to make it possible for God to 'come' to him in fullness and restore him to his proper relationship with his Creator. I cannot see that there is any way of interpreting the Incarnation which will preserve its complete meaning, save the way of saying that the relationship which is actualized in Jesus Christ is potential in men—potential and also in varying degrees accomplished, however sporadically and spasmodically this may be.

This confident Christian assurance is the guarantee in Christian theology that man is in his essential nature 'savable' and good', however he may have fallen into sin and may remain in a sinful state: and that he is also the child of God who is nowhere without the loving care of his heavenly Father and always welcomed home to that Father when he turns from his wickedness. Furthermore, it is this assurance which makes it possible for the Christian to claim that God 'has nowhere left himself without witness'; and that in all the good works of men, however partial they may be in their goodness, as in every truthful thought and loving deed and creation of beauty, God is at work. In man's moral sense, in his search for reality in any field, in his courage and devotion, in his making of things lovely and harmonious, there is something of the divine operation. All of this is the work of the *Logos* who undergirds human life in its historical situations, moves through men to achieve his great ends, and makes 'even the wrath of men' to praise the God who created and creates, who revealed and reveals, and who will crown his continuing action with the bringing of his creation into intimate personal union with himself.

This world, then, is an incarnational world; and despite the attacks on the concept by some of our contemporary theologians, I am sure that there is no other Christian way of describing the creation. As Cardinal Bérulle once wrote, the Incarnation is 'the manner and mode of all of God's work in his world'; supremely, we should add, it is the manner and mode of God's work and way in and for and with men.

The difficulty which we may find, as the Christian Church historically has found, in some of the answers to the Christological question has been precisely in the inability of those answers to deal adequately with this rich and deep experience of 'salvation' or wholeness of life through Jesus Christ. Implicit in this experience is the double-truth of a 'salvation' wrought in terms of, and under the conditions of, human historical existence, *and* a 'salvation' wrought not by man alone, even by man at his best, but by God himself, in and through human historical experience.

The docetic Christology with which early Christian thought was compelled to wrestle was unable to safeguard and preserve one essential aspect of this rich reality; while an ebionite Christology, with which the Church also wrestled in its early days, and its fairly recent revival in much of the 'liberal Christianity' of the past century, was unable to safeguard and preserve the other essential aspect.

Whatever may have been docetism's relationship to gnosticism as a general philosophical pattern for much of the sophisticated thought of the Graeco-Roman world at the time when Christological speculation was first attempting to think through the problem of the nature of Christ, docetism was a serious menace to the whole Christian position. Our particular interest is, of course, in its Christological implications; but it is worth noticing that the distrust of history and human life as lived 'in the flesh' which marked the docetic position, were by no means confined to those who thought of themselves as Christians. In the hellenistic world spirituality had for many seemed indissolubly associated with a distrust of the hard actualities of flesh and blood existence, with sexuality and its expression, and with every other normal manifestation of that earthiness which is natural to man. Nor has this tendency been absent from later ages of the Christian Church itself. One can trace its persistence in the placing of virginity on a higher level than married life, in the dislike of the ordinary pleasures of eating and drinking, and in the contempt for the world and for man's historical experience which so frequently characterizes those who have thought of themselves as especially 'spiritual'. Even in late Judaism, if what we know of the Essenes is any indication of the facts, there was such a tendency at super-spirituality with a distaste for the world and its materiality.

The docetic Christological tendency was in fact simply another expression of this general movement of thought. To say that Jesus had come 'in the flesh' seemed to relate him altogether too intimately with the dirt and evil of historical existence; to think of him as genuinely human, with a body that was of the dust of the earth and with passions like those of ordinary men, appeared to diminish his deity and make him a partaker of the evil world in its utter alienation from spirituality. And when the Church had effectively dealt with the denial of the physical humanity of Jesus, it had still to reckon with those who felt that at least his mind or

soul must be divine, while his physical organism served simply as the outward mask or veil for his true divinity. This, too, the Church dealt with when it condemned the heresy known as Apollinarianism. But as the late Dr. Hastings Rashdall demonstrated in his famous controversy with Bishop Gore, St. Athanasius, the great leader of Nicene orthodoxy, was himself not unaffected by these ideas, even if in his later years he recognized something of their error and sought to guard himself against them.

It may indeed be said that while docetism as a formal system has been condemned and is long since dead, there is a persisting drive towards this position which often associates itself peculiarly with those who think of their view as rigidly orthodox. St. Cyril of Alexandria—saint, certainly, only by his traditional title—with all his zeal for what he conceived to be the orthodox teaching about our Lord, seemed to have taken an attitude towards human nature which found it unworthy of having any really full substantial reality in the person of Christ, and this despite his verbal insistence on that reality. Likewise some of the spokesmen for the monophysite Christology, which was in a deep sense at one with Cyril's view, would appear to have had as their driving motive not only an interest in maintaining the unity of Christ's person as against what it conceived to be the dualism which Chalcedon affirmed, but also a feeling—not unnatural to those who led a celibate monastic life—that it was somehow unworthy of Christ to think of him as having two natures, one of them human in the most utterly complete sense. I realize that to state it thus is to run the risk of being charged with a simplification or even a misreading of history, yet I am sure that one may as it were read between the lines and discern just such a distrust as I have indicated. Nor has this distrust quite disappeared in later years, even in our own time. There is an implicit docetism in much of the popular dislike for a strong emphasis on the total reality of Jesus' humanity. Such a distaste may explain the feeling that, as I have heard a distinguished preacher assert, he could not suffer as all others must, because in some fashion he was so divine that he knew that the end of the passion was to be complete victory; and it may be behind the notion, found among certain 'neo-orthodox' theologians, that it is the Christ of Christian faith alone, rather than the 'mummy' of the Jesus of history, who is the really important centre of the Christian religion.

Furthermore, the docetic tendency with its isolation of the divinity of Jesus from immersion in the stinging realities of time and space has expressed itself in an unwillingness to relate the Lord to the total action of God, in more general and diffused ways, through the course of history and in the world of nature. Lip-service may indeed be paid to the doctrine of the Eternal Word 'by whom all things were made', but for all practical (and often for all important theological) purposes, his

presence and his work are confined to Christ himself—and sometimes not to Christ as a concrete historical figure but to the 'Christ-event' in the sense of something which happened, so to speak, in connection with this concrete historical figure but yet so transcendent to his vivid human life that it appears to belong rather to some theological cloud-cuckoo land.

One presumes that this extreme emphasis on our Lord's divinity and its apparent abstraction, often enough from his actual human life, is in our own time a reaction from an *over*-emphasis by certain varieties of Protestant 'liberalism' on the Jesus of history in all his limitation and conditioning. There can be little doubt that liberalism of that sort was in fact far removed from the deepest insight of the Christian faith, even if one can say that at least it was attempting to begin from hard facts and not from speculation and theory. But an exaggerated insistence on the Jesus of history to the exclusion of any faith in his person can hardly claim to be in itself an historically grounded approach to the data with which we must deal. Form-critical study has made it apparent to us that there is not available for our inspection any completely uninterpreted, and in that sense merely biographical, Jesus.

That there *was* such a 'biographical Jesus', who really lived in Palestine, is of course obvious. But our knowledge of him is always given, in the gospel records, 'from faith to faith'. We are not able, as some once thought, by some exegetical legerdemain to get back to a supposedly simple teacher of spiritual truths, an eminent exponent of ethical and religious principles, and then speak of the faith in Jesus as the Messiah as a perversion of the religion which he himself believed and practised. Everything that we know about him is mediated to us through the faith-interpretation of the primitive Christian community; and while theoretically we may speak of the 'days of his flesh' without any such interpretation, the truth is that this 'uninterpreted' figure is in its *detailed* portrayal almost entirely a figment of the imagination. Thus it is fair to say that liberal Christologies which began with Jesus as the teacher or prophet and regarded interpretations of him in 'higher' terms as alien intrusions into the simplicities of the Palestinian rabbi, are building with straw but without bricks.

On the other hand, there can be nothing but gratitude for the insistence of the 'liberal school' on the essential historicity of Christianity and its insistence that any interpretations by faith must not run away from, or seek to deny, the limitations on Christological thought which such historicity implies. Even the faith-interpretation which qualifies all that is said about Jesus in the gospels is not able to remove from the picture of our Lord those 'historical conditionings' which mark manhood in any of its individuations. He lived in a given place at a given time, he was able to think and speak only in the terms possible for one living in such circumstances; and we dare not remove him, or attempt to do so, from

that concrete placement in the realm of the historical. On the other side of the picture, the liberals were right to insist that, given those very factors which so characterize him as an historical personality, we can see that he must have manifested a depth of insight, a spiritual discernment, a mysterious quality of life in communion with God, a selectivity in his teaching, which demand that he shall be accepted as *the Man*—man in his highest reach towards God, man in his richest understanding of God's will and way, man in the fullest and truest sense.

Karl Barth is surely far wrong when he says, with a brashness that approaches blasphemy, that apart from Christian faith in Jesus Christ as the Eternal Word made flesh, our Lord as simply human is not a very interesting or significant personality, not even as much so as the other 'founders' of religions. After reading this statement, one can only conclude that Barth, as so often with him, is engaging in polemical writing in order to make his point about the necessity for faith in our Lord as divine; and that he is not asserting what in his heart of hearts he must really feel as he contemplates Jesus even as a 'simple' historical figure. 'That strange Man upon the Cross', in Tyrrell's striking phrase, has a fascination and an appeal, quite apart from our specifically Christian affirmations as to who he really is; and the 'liberal theologians' were right in bringing this fascination and appeal to our attention.

We can now see that docetism, ancient and modern, and the simple humanitarian interpretations of Christ, have each of them got hold of part of the truth, but precisely because they put all their stress on that one part, they get the *whole* picture wrong. I venture to think, however, that it is possible to get the picture right, and if we take account of all the facts, both of history and of faith, and try to put them together in such a way that they make sense not only of the recorded story but of the developing experience of Christian discipleship in the community of faith.

The full *datum* for Christological thought takes account of the double-truth of human historical existence *and* of divine action in and through that human historical existence. In consequence, four affirmations appear to be integral to the life of the Christian Church as it seeks to understand the basic ground of its being. These four affirmations may be stated as follows:

(1) *Jesus is truly human.* However we may think of the ways in which we come to know about him, and whatever reliance we may place upon the details of the narratives found in the gospels, there can be no Christianity without the humanity of Jesus. He was born, he lived and worked, he suffered and died; and all this as a man. Here is no phantom, no ghost; here is no ideal principle imaginatively pictured in terms of human personality. Here is a genuine human life, which like all human lives has its particular locus, its particular conditions, its particular environment. The insistence on such a particularity may indeed be the occasion for a great

many problems—problems from which we cannot hope to escape but which we must resolutely and honestly face. But at the same time the particularity gives *point* to the whole Christian understanding of human existence, since it demands that the harsh yet inevitable facts of history and of the uniqueness of the historical realm be accepted. It also makes it possible for the Christian to believe that his relationship with God is never to be abstracted from the concrete reality of life in this world, under the conditions and through the circumstances which such life in the world makes necessary. God, if he is to be known at all, must be known by us in such a way that the world, and our life in it, are taken at their full value, *as they are* and not as we might like them to be. Whatever was done by God in Christ, however he made himself present to and available for us, was all done under human historical conditions, in the full and real humanity which each one of us knows so intimately and directly.

(2) *Christ is truly divine.* Without attempting, at this point, to define and describe more precisely the nature of his divinity, or the manner of its participation in his manhood, we can be clear about the basic statement. That which was done in Christ was not a human achievement only. The presence of manhood, even manhood in its highest conceivable reach, is not the only presence Christians have encountered when they have met Christ. However they may have stated their experience and however they may have explained the fact as they saw it, they have been convinced that *God* is there. On occasion they may seem almost to have confined God to his presence and work in this historical event; and it has then been the task of the more thoughtful of them to protest against such a tendency and to develop a Christology which will guard against such exaggerated claims. Or they may have seemed on occasion to 'reduce' the presence and work to the more average operation of God in the general run of human experience; and it has then been the task of the more thoughtful to protest against this tendency and to develop a Christology which will guard against a 'uniformitarianism' in the divine work and presence among men. But granted that these tendencies have marked the history of Christian thought, as they have marked the history of Christian experience, the fact remains that somehow, in some very real fashion, God has been apprehended as present in and acting through the person of Jesus Christ.

(3) *Jesus Christ is one person.* In this true man, who is also truly divine, Christians have not encountered a schizophrenic personality. They have been sure that there is a unity of life, an integration of personality, in him, so that he is *all of a piece.* This apprehension has been phrased in different ways. One group of Christians has tended to say that God is living and acting humanly in this person. Another has tended to say that this person is the Man in whom God lives and acts. The difference between the two ways of phrasing the fact which Christians have

encountered has led to an almost interminable theological argument, which has been as little enlightening as it has been little edifying. Each Christian, even to-day, will prefer one or the other way of phrasing the fact. But at least the *fact* is a constant. With some historical inaccuracy, we may say that the former style is more Alexandrine or Cyrillian, the latter more Antiochene or Nestorian (or better, more like the thought of Theodore of Mopsuestia); and one may believe that there will always be some who are of the former way of thinking and some who are of the latter. At least this much of Professor Sellars' argument in *Two Ancient Christologies* and *The Council of Chalcedon* has merit, despite what may appear his pressing of some of the historical data into the mould of a neatly-patterned scheme. I, myself, am among those who much prefer the latter way of putting the meaning of the fact. But for our present purpose this is not so important as is the truth that both types of Christological statement are intent on the *main* point, which is the reality of Christ's person as in some real sense a genuine unity.

As we read of the life of our Lord in the days of his flesh, we are not conscious of any duality in his life; he is all one, both in his relations with his human brethren and in his relationship with God his Father. Whatever divinity we may find in him or ascribe to him, is not the *contradiction* of his humanity. Whatever humanity we discover there, is not the *denial* of his divinity. *How* we envisage the interaction of the two will not minimize the unity which we see. Moberly's fine declaration that we are not to look for the divinity apart from or alongside the humanity, but to find both of them together, so that 'the Incarnate never leaves his incarnation', is but another way of stating the given fact of the unity of person in Jesus Christ. And even those who begin their Christological study with the living Christ of the Church's faith, rather than with the Jesus portrayed for us in his historical appearance in the gospel narratives, can never successfully sever the one from the other. The Christ of the Church's faith and experience and the Jesus of the historical story are the same person, and the person is *one* person.

(4) *Jesus Christ is intimately related to the more general action, presence, and revelation of God* in his world and supremely in human history. This fourth affirmation seems to me to be quite as necessary as the preceding three. As I have said above, one of the difficulties and dangers of the docetic tendency in Christology, as much in certain contemporary theologians as in those of the early history of the Church, is found precisely here. By cutting Jesus Christ off from his brethren, or by removing him from the context of human history, such a Christology makes him a meaningless intrusion into the affairs of men. It not only denies the truth of his genuine humanity; it also makes him a senseless prodigy, who cannot speak to our condition because he is not intimately related to it.

Furthermore, it provides no possible criterion for the Christian affirmation of faith in him, save an appeal to the *testimonium internum Spiritus Sancti* which when employed in this particular way becomes an irrational and unprofitable escape. For while it is true that 'no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost', it is equally true that the Holy Ghost works in men not to destroy their human capacities and their God-given insight into truth, but to confirm and strengthen, to enlighten and inform, those capacities and that insight. I believe that it was Miss Evelyn Underhill who noted, in one of her books, that it is only because men already have some knowledge of God, however mediated, that they are able to recognize him when he manifests himself so supremely in our Lord.

There is about Jesus both a *uniqueness* and a *universality* which inescapably attract us. If during the so-called 'liberal' period of theology, his universality was emphasized almost to the exclusion of his uniqueness, the reverse would seem to be true in recent years. It is possible so to stress the way in which our Lord is the expression of God's ways with men in a very general and pervasive sense, that we lose sight of the vividness, the directness, the immediacy of *this particular* event. But it is also possible so to stress the uniqueness of Jesus, so to single him out and set him up in complete isolation, so to insist on what is often styled his 'absoluteness', that we lose sight of the way in which he is supremely characteristic, entirely expressive, of the constant activity of God in the world of men and the realm of human history.

It was a philosopher of our own century who described the world in which we live as manifesting 'continuity of process with emergence of genuine novelty'. Our present theological mood is antipathetic to this sort of language; our biblical theologians regard it with horror and feel that it is entirely inappropriate, if not positively sinful, to speak in such terms. Nonetheless I am convinced that it is only in such a context that we can thoughtfully and theologically understand the person and work of our Lord. In the whole rich fullness of God's working in the world, in the wonderfully various and many-graded revelation which he makes of himself to his human children, Jesus Christ in the totality of his person and work is crucial, definitive, unique. But it is *in* that general working and *in* that wide revelation that he has his place. Nor can his uniqueness be *absolute*, for it is surely an elementary axiom of logic, whatever logic we may have (provided it is a logic that makes sense), that the *absolutely* unique is absolutely *unknowable*. Nor can the recently devised 'logic of the singular', as it has been called, help us here; for it is equally true that even to talk about the 'singular' is to relate it to the rest of experience, and then it is no longer 'singular' in the sense in which this word is intended.

I should like to conclude with some general remarks about Christology. Our task is to win men to Jesus Christ and not to some given

explanation of his person in the language of theology, however ancient. As Dr. William Porcher DuBose used to say, we are sometimes guilty in our theological and apologetical labours of a kind of disbelief in our Lord. We think that unless we can force our hearers to accept the precise language which seems to us, or which has seemed even to the Church itself in its 'official' capacity, to be correct, then we have not really managed to 'convert' them. Whereas the fact is that if we genuinely and deeply believe in our Lord as that Man in whom God lives and acts, humanwise, we can be perfectly certain that faith in him, however reached, will never be content until it has claimed for him 'the highest place that heaven affords'. In a work now long since forgotten, William Scott Palmer remarked on all this. He said that when an enquirer tells us that he is able only to accept Jesus as Man, but that at any rate he will faithfully and loyally accept him as such, we may well smile to ourselves, for we know that anyone who accepts our Lord at all, in such faith and with such loyalty, will never be able to stop there. Somehow or other, in mysterious and subtle ways, he will be led to see that there is more to it than that, very much more; and in the end, even if not to our eyes, Christ will reveal to that man, in the celebrated words of Schweitzer's, 'as an ineffable secret who he is'.

THE CHURCH, THE PSYCHOLOGISTS, AND SEX

By the Rev. Professor L. W. Grensted, D.D.

I should like to call attention to a book* which constitutes a very real challenge to the Churches, a challenge all the more significant because it comes from within, and not from an outside critic. To appreciate that challenge we may start with two questions. Each has an easy answer, but, taken in conjunction they raise a problem of acute urgency to-day.

What is sin? Disobedience to the Law of God, Natural and Revealed. So far there would be general agreement throughout the whole range of the Christian tradition. But obviously it is a definition which needs interpretation and of which the application to particular states and acts is a matter both of great complexity and of supreme pastoral importance.

What is sex? The essential pattern of the process by which, throughout the animal world and beyond it, the life of individuals is renewed in successive generations. In each species, up to and including man, this pattern involves its own characteristic structure and behaviour, and impulses to fulfilment of the most powerful kind. The pattern involves a duality of sexes, male and female, each with its separate functions, which must necessarily be conjoined whenever the pattern reaches its completion. The species Man is male and female. Each, but neither alone, is Man.

At what point, if at all, do these two definitions meet? Clearly enough, and here no reputable Christian theologian has dared to differ, the physical nature implanted in man by God's creative act, whether through a process of evolution or otherwise, is good. Yet there is an enormous weight of Christian authority, at least from the time of St. Augustine and reaching back to some at least of the language of the New Testament, for the close connection of sex with sin. In particular, to save belief in the inherent goodness of God's creation, emphasis has been laid not upon the physical facts themselves so much as upon the desire which leads up to and accompanies the acts. In the Thirty-nine Articles the Church of England stated its acceptance of this tradition with cautious obscurity but obvious intention: 'And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek *Phronema sarkos*, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.' And in the equally authoritative Latin of the Articles, 'nature of sin' is represented by the ingenious 'ratio peccati', a phrase of which the ambiguity defies translation.

**Sex in Christianity and Psychoanalysis*, by William Graham Cole. (London, Allen & Unwin; 21/-.)

The Church, and by no means the Church of England alone, is struggling with the handicap of this tradition in trying to deal with the immense problems of sex morality and matrimonial irregularity to-day. The authorities and assemblies of the various religious denominations put out statements which in varying degrees combine real pastoral concern with an almost terrifying rigidity of outlook. And all the time a revolution of thought and practice is sweeping across the countries which might with most reason be claimed as Christian in the springs of their polity and social life. It is not that men and women are more immoral, in the sense of sexual licence, than they were. The difference is that they are now very widely challenging the restrictive standards and utterances of the Church in the name of morality itself. They are in fact declaring that the Christian tradition is unChristian. Why, they ask, should a married couple be held in what Sir Alan Herbert described as Holy Deadlock, when the love that gave reality to the marriage has disappeared? And why, when the State, on good cause shewn, has granted a divorce should it be held for ever impossible that an innocent partner (and some would add a guilty one as well) should truly, honestly, before God and before man, be married again. To say this is not to ignore the very real social difficulties and dangers involved, or the values inherent in the witness of the Church to the obligations of marriage and its sanctity. But the question is being asked, and asked insistently by good people, Christian people, and very often by people who are more than anxious to be loyal members of the Church.

Many years ago now a doctor I knew married his deceased wife's sister and was driven from the communion of the Church of England, though not from the fellowship of his Christian friends. He joined the one congregation that would receive him, and lived and died respected by all. His son, by that second wife, became an outstanding missionary. In law he committed no offence. He may have been mistaken in his action, though few who knew him and his family could so judge him. But to say that he was 'living in sin', or that his son was so soiled by the conditions under which he was born that his missionary witness was invalid (whatever that over-used word may mean), is nonsense. Its only effect would be to deprive the word 'sin' of any intelligible meaning.

Concurrently with this challenge to traditional moral theology comes the evidence of the psychologists, and of the psychoanalysts in particular. For in dealing with neuroses, psychoses, and other problems of human behaviour, sex in all its manifestations, normal and perverse alike, has had to be treated with the same impartial and unemotional scrutiny as the bodily symptoms of disease. It is perfectly useless, *crede experto*, to attempt to help a man or woman who is involved in the entanglements of sex maladjustment if one starts from a lofty platform of moral or ecclesiastical censure, or from the human enough but, in the end, cowardly

refusal to discuss such subjects as 'beastly' or 'disgusting'. The unfortunate victim of some perversion may be confused, puzzled, frightened by emotions that seem beyond control, or intimidated by social or pietistic climates. But he is a human being and knows in his very bones that that is true, whatever the parson may say. It may be added that when he comes across a parson who does not say it, the shock is often enough to cure him.

The book which is here under notice is a book by such a parson. In it Professor Cole, starting from a long and wide experience of the problems of American students, says clearly and decisively many things highly relevant to the modern situation, with the background of very considerable psychological knowledge, theoretical and clinical. He challenges the Church to take seriously both the new knowledge of sex given to us by the psychoanalysts and the widespread, if often unspoken, claim that some part at least of the modern refusal to condemn sex liberty is more Christian than conventional moral theology. Professor Cole, now at Williams College and formerly Counsellor to Protestant Students at Columbia University, has the academic standing to approach the whole subject as a scholar, though his scholarship has obviously a more first-hand quality in his psychological reading. The latter part of his book gives one of the best accounts I have seen of the development of Freud's theories and of the substantial range of facts upon which they are based. To this he has added a survey of the way in which Freud's work has been developed and in some respects criticized by recent American psychoanalysts, of whom Horney, Rado, and Alexander are selected as representative. All this is brought into the picture simply as factual. The theories, theological or anti-theological, metaphysical or 'metapsychological', to use a term now coming into respectable service in some psychological books, are for this purpose secondary and, indeed, both shifting and insecure. But the facts are facts, and so are the findings of the dull but formidable Kinsey report, 'the most widely bought and least widely read book of our generation', which form, in America with abundant parallels elsewhere, a startling commentary upon Freud's real discoveries in laying bare the natural history, physical and emotional, of the sexual life of the human species.

What has, of course, become perfectly clear is that the story is one not primarily of sin, temptation and the like, but of a natural history, with characteristic developments and changes of orientation from childhood on into adult life. Within that natural history there are certain normal repressions necessary to the family and social life of particular races, and there are, equally naturally, variations in the sexual heritage of individuals, and various ways in which the normal development, if thwarted, gives rise to compensatory behaviours under the stress of insecurity, anxiety or fear. All this lies at unconscious levels, resulting in perversions of obsessive force, which, being hidden and constituting a

violation of social custom, give rise sometimes in the individual concerned and sometimes in others of more normal or different development, the liveliest emotions of disgust and abhorrence. These transform, in the individual so developing, into shame, and in others into a moral censure which is strongly tinged with the emotions from which it springs. The explanations that such and such a perversion, say homosexuality as a psychological state, is sinful because it is forbidden by God, or because it is unnatural, are sheer rationalisations. The realization of this, as every psychoanalyst and every wise spiritual director knows, is the first step towards cure and control. It is horrifying to know that there are still confessors who can recommend, with the portentous dominance of their office, flagellation as a remedy for masturbation, and who regard the consequent psychological breakdown of some penitent not as their own handiwork but as that of the devil. I am not inventing this. I heard of such a case only a few months ago.

With all this in mind, Professor Cole has taken in hand a very careful study of the Christian tradition, starting from the New Testament and thereafter selecting for a full analysis and survey the writings of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Luther and Calvin. His fundamental thesis is that the original Hebrew tradition regarded sex in itself without any sort of inhibitions, though its social implications in marriage were fully recognized. This naturalism, he affirms, remains in the Gospels, and it is only when the Christian preaching came under Oriental and Hellenistic influences that we have, in St. Paul, the beginnings of the very different and paralysing conception of the 'flesh' as in itself evil, in some way corrupted from God's original purpose in Creation. It is I think here that Professor Cole, though saying something of the greatest importance, does not carry guns enough to make his case complete. He has leaned heavily upon Tillich, and there is more than a suggestion that he is not as familiar with the original languages involved as he is with the writings of Freud. Otherwise he could not call *anaclino* a Latin verb, or have passed the spelling 'superceded'. And it is a sheer howler, based I imagine upon a misreading of Tillich, when he says that *eros,* the ordinary term for physical sex-love, is one of three words used for love in the New Testament. Actually neither *eros* nor the aspect of sex for which it stands is ever mentioned there. This is the kind of mistake that matters, for it comes very near to the main theme of his argument. And I think that he overpresses the point that we do not really know exactly what Jesus meant when he spoke of *porneia* and *moicheia.* In the light of their context, as well as of their use in contemporary Greek and in the Epistles, we know quite well enough. But the main point remains. There is no sign in the Gospels and really very little in St. Paul's letters of the strong emotional inhibitions which distort the outlook of St. Augustine and of the great subsequent theologians who laid down the pattern of all

theological thinking down to the present day. The very full accounts of the teaching of Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and the Council of Trent provide most valuable material for a proper understanding and appraisal of the official utterances of the authorities of the Churches to-day.

What is of course new in this present century is the realization that these strong emotional overtones in the history of the doctrinal discussion of sex are entirely comprehensible as survivals of infantile fixations, aberrations of super-ego, distorting influences of the Id and the Oedipus Complex, and the struggle towards Individuation and all the rest of it. In very much of what he writes St. Augustine may believe that he is writing about sin, original and actual, when in fact he was dealing with facts of the natural history of man which, at that date, great psychologist as he was, he had not the remotest chance of understanding.

But we have that chance now, and all our thinking must be re-shaped accordingly. Whether our practice must be re-shaped too remains to be seen. In some things the Church may well be right, even though the reasons given by her doctors have been far astray. In some her spokesmen are certainly wrong.

And one thing remains clear. Sex, as an energy of human living, has one special characteristic. It is always in principle a shared energy, except where some repression turns it inwards in primitive or perverted expression. And therefore its enjoyment can truly become sinful where one person uses either the body of another or his own body at a level which is lower than personal. It is not disgust that determines our judgment on these things but the far higher principle of honouring personal being wherever we meet it. With that principle in mind, we can start anew to consider our attitude to prostitution, homosexual behaviour, the relation in these connections of sin and crime, and all the problems that are so much in the air to-day. And it may even be that Christians, learning charity from the psychologists, may yet find their way to that sound judgment which so many men of good will are asking of them, and too often asking in vain. When we can say, 'Neither do I condemn thee', we can go on to say 'Go, and sin no more'.

LITERATURE AS RELIGION*

By Henry F. Pommer, Associate Professor of English, Allegheny College

In *The American Scholar*, Emerson told his audience that 'the theory of books is noble'. He had in mind several types of nobility characterizing literature; one of the most important sprang from its religious functions:

> The religions of the world are the ejaculations of a few imaginative men (*The Poet* iii, 34).[1]
>
> All that we call sacred history attests that the birth of a poet is the principal event in chronology (*Ibid.* iii, 11).
>
> What people call religion is literature.[2]

These assertions about the religious nobility of books raise many issues of major importance for every serious reader and writer. Three such issues quickly emerge as fundamental: (1) Is there an essence of religion and literature? (2) Is there but one scripture? (3) Is there, instead of an interdependence of religion and literature, an essential dependence of one or the other? An affimative answer to any of these questions will set speedy and firm limits to our study.

First, is there an essence of religion and literature? Suppose someone asked, 'Can literature instead of Hinduism or Anglicanism or Methodism become one's religion?' The question could be answered with dispatch if there were a simple and incontrovertible essence of religion and essence of literature which could be precisely defined and then juxtaposed for comparison and contrast. But it is dangerous to propose neat and simple essences of things so richly diversified as religion and literature. Could any definition of the essence of religion do justice to all the variety of appeals and functions in Roman Catholicism, Zen Buddhism, Mahayana Hinduism, Reform Judaism, and Transcendentalism? Each of these religions is itself a complex thing; the Catholicism of a Trappist monk is not in all respects the Catholicism of Pope Pius. Lexicographers over-simplify of necessity, and scholars are stimulating but not exhaustive when they define religion as 'the shared quest of the good life', or as 'what the individual does with his solitariness'. Again, if one specified an essence of literature, might he not exclude many of the dominant characteristics and important values of Lao-tze's *Book of Tao*, the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, *The Brothers Karamazov*, or Emerson's best poems? There probably is no tidy essence of literature and religion with which our inquiry can reach a tidy conclusion.

*The substance of this essay was first presented as a Phi Beta Kappa address at Allegheny College.

[1]References are to *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Centenary Edition. (Boston, N.Y., and London.)

[2]*Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson.* (Boston, N.Y., and London, ix, 345.)

'*But if there is no essence of religion, surely there is essential scripture. One book, and only one book, contains all religious truth, and for that book there can be no substitution.*' But who raises this second fundamental issue? A Jew thinking of the Old Testament? A Christian thinking of both Testaments? or a Mohammedan thinking of the Koran? The existence of such counterclaims must give us pause.

Charles Grosvenor Osgood, distinguished professor of literature at Princeton University for twenty-four years, was also an informed and thoughtful Protestant. In his *Poetry as a Means of Grace*, he raises the question of the relative sacredness of books. He rejects the view that all art, including all literature, is sacred, and also the contrary view that all art is secular. The third view which he rejects is that

> the Bible, a whole library in itself, contains every kind of book you really need, and, above all, the inspired truth as no other book contains it.

The fourth view, which Osgood himself accepts, is that the Bible is uniquely important, but that its effect upon us can be valuably supplemented through the reading of secular books:

> Literature serves its best ends, and keeps itself procreative by ministering pleasurably to the spiritual needs in any generation to which it may survive. Instead of levelling sacred literature down to its own plane, profane or secular literature dignifies itself to higher ends. . . . As (in *The Divine Comedy*) Virgil might not enter Paradise, so secular literature cannot equal Holy Writ in power or authority or efficacy as a means of grace. Yet it may illustrate, reinforce, verify, and illuminate Holy Writ, and warp the world into the range and field of its magnetic influence. It may serve us as the sycamore tree served Zacchaeus, to gain a clearer sight of the Incarnate Truth.[3]

Osgood is surely correct about there being a distinction between sacred and secular literature, but is the distinction sharp? We may be faced with a continuum from secular to sacred, different works being ranged up and down the scale—for example, Emerson's *Nature* higher than *Representative Men*, and both of them higher than *English Traits*. If there is such a continuum, two questions arise concerning its upper limit. First, has the upper extreme yet been reached? Was it reached by the Old Testament? by the New Testament? Will it be reached by a Testament yet to be written? Second, may not several books have achieved the same maximum point on the continuum? There may be more than one tree for a modern Zacchaeus to climb. For Osgood and millions who share his faith, there is only one 'Incarnate Truth', and therefore only one tree of supreme value. Other men, lacking that faith, have found spiritual enlargement through climbing the Ygdrasil of Norse mythology; may modern man find such enlargement equally by climbing the sycamore tree of Jerusalem, the bo tree of Buddha's India—or even the pines of Walden Pond? Emerson's own preference was for a whole forest of trees.

[3]C. G. Osgood, *Poetry as a Means of Grace*. (Princeton and London, 1946, p. 6-8.)

In *The American Scholar*, he attacked all claims for the exclusive value of one Holy Writ. 'The theory of books is noble.' Yes.

> Yet hence arises a grave mischief. The sacredness which attaches to the act of creation, the act of thought, is transferred to the record. The poet chanting was felt to be a divine man: henceforth the chant is divine also. The writer was a just and wise spirit: henceforth it is settled the book is perfect; as love of the hero corrupts into worship of his statue. Instantly the book becomes noxious: the guide is a tyrant (i, 87-89).

To understand how Emerson could make such a statement demands at least a brief consideration of his concept of the poet and of God.

Emerson's century was the first in which Western culture saw clearly that the Bible is in many ways literature. It was also the first century since the fall of Rome to see that literature could be a religion. Emerson's was only one of many voices creating and echoing these ideas. He spoke on the basis of a philosophy which might be paraphrased thus: Everything which exists can be divided into two categories—spirit and the things created by spirit. To the former belong the Over-Soul and men's souls; to the latter, nature, our bodies, works of art. Whatever belongs to spirit is part of the only ultimate creative force, the Over-Soul, which is good, is unified, and is the creator of everything. Sometimes that portion of the Over-Soul which is in man is aroused to creativity. When thus aroused, the soul does not express the man whose name it bears, but the ultimate reality of which it is a part. Thus Emerson is able to rejoice in 'the severe music of the bards that have sung of the true God in all ages' (*Address . . . in Divinity College* i, 133). One person [that is, one Over-Soul] wrote all the books (*Nominalist and Realist* iii, 232).

For Emerson, the poet is not merely or primarily a writer of verses. He is a man of unusually fine character who opens his soul to the beauty and truth of the spiritual world and then communicates his vision through a fluid symbolism and with the ardour of a devoted preacher. The poet above all other men has the ability to see God; above all others he has the responsibility of speaking freely, truly, and movingly.

Let us, at least for the duration of this paper, take Emerson's part against Osgood, and assume a negative answer to our second fundamental issue—whether there is but one scripture. '*But is there not, at the very least, an essential relationship between religion and literature? Isn't literature essentially dependent upon religion, so that it cannot flourish apart from institutionalized religion?*' This is our third fundamental issue.

Some literature, particularly during the early Middle Ages, was so dependent upon the Church that it would seem preposterous to ask whether literature could replace religion. How could Dante's *Divine Comedy* have taken shape without the previous existence of an institutionalized Church? A person asking this question would take quick comfort from Emerson's statement that with 'the loss of worship . . .

literature becomes frivolous' (*Ibid.*, 143). Yet Emerson did not confine worship to its institutional forms, and the greatness of *The Divine Comedy* was followed within a hundred years by Chaucer's *Troylus and Cryseyde* and *The Canterbury Tales*, great works which did not depend in any vital way upon an institutional religion. To be sure, Chaucer and even Shakespeare have seemed frivolous to some critics, including Emerson—frivolous, that is, because they lacked the high seriousness of Dante or Milton. If that charge could be maintained, it would suggest that for maximum value, literature must either express an already existing religion, or be the foundation of a new one. Thus, to turn to a more recent example, Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* can be said to have expressed an already existing worship of democracy, and it has been hailed as the bible which founded an intensified worship of man's dignity.

* * * *

These tentative conclusions on three fundamental issues leave us facing the complexity of literature and religion, the varieties and degrees of holy books, the several kinds of interdependence between literature and religion. Such conclusions suggest that we next enumerate the chief functions of religion and then consider which, if any, can be fulfilled by works of literature.

At least four functions traditionally connected with religion cannot be performed by literature: the stimulation of worship by music and architecture, and the provision of ritual activity, of direct fellowship, and of united ethical action. In connection with other functions, however, literature has clear and great potentialities. These functions are those to which scripture is important, and the greatest of them is to stimulate the religious experience.

The aspect of religion which one is most tempted to call its essence, is the religious experience itself. It is an exaltation, a commitment, an awareness of holiness. It must be experienced to be known, for even when experienced, it cannot well be described.

It can be spoken of as an emotion with conviction. The conviction may be of union with God, with reality, with ultimate good; it may be conviction of unshakable peace of mind; it may be the mystic's conviction of whatever intensity or scope. Certainly the religious experience is not to be identified with the pronouncement of any creed or the performance of any act, though it can be initiated by almost any kind of stimulus—saying a creed, performing a ritual, seeing a beauty of nature, talking with a thoroughly alive person. It is frequently stimulated by reading a poem as long as 'The Faerie Queene' or as short as Keats's 'Ode on Melancholy'; a work as prosy as *Pilgrim's Progress* or as enraptured as Emerson's 'The Over-Soul'.

Experience is of primary importance. But the aids to it are not to be neglected, and one of the most important is artistic language, whether written or spoken. Beyond that, the chief services of language to religion are probably these:

(1) creating an awareness of the larger context of life,
(2) creating an understanding of that context,
(3) clarifying ethical concepts,
(4) exhorting to ethical conduct,
(5) providing myth and legend,
(6) providing the liturgy of worship.

First, then, literature can serve religion by creating an awareness of the larger context of life. 'The larger context of life' suggests a distinction between the narrow context of one's job, friendships, and domestic obligations, and the larger context, including the totality of nature, ultimate reality and value, the meaning and destiny of life. There seems something stunted about a man who remains so fascinated by the surface of life that he tries neither to look beneath the surface, nor to understand the relationship between surface and sub-surface, nor to reorganize the surface in the light of the sub-surface *ought*. Fortunately many works of *belles-lettres* encourage an awareness of this larger context. Indeed, many secular critics judge a work of art partly by the richness and complexity of the view of life it presents.

Literature functions, however, to create not only an awareness but also an understanding of the larger context of life. To consider this function necessitates at least a glance at methods for understanding the world, and at the value of theology and philosophy for testing and stating religious truth.

Two of the most important tools men have for understanding the world are events (which are concrete) and categories (which are abstract). The tools are not, of course, mutually exclusive, and we need both. Sometimes religion is conceived of as the drama of the Hebrews and of Jesus; sometimes as the categories of Paul's epistles. Post-Biblical literature may try to explain the larger context through the drama of Goethe's *Faust* or through the abstractions of Emerson's *Essays: First Series*. Unique historical events may be used to show meaning—the voluntary sacrifice of Jesus, the courage of Hemingway's old man of the sea; or a series of abstractions may be used to stabilize essential ideas—the Sermon on the Mount, Emerson's 'Brahma'. These are the two methods: to think with concretions and to think with abstractions. But the farther we proceed with them, the more we suspect that the historian and creator of fiction on the one hand, and the expositor of theology and philosophy on the other, are dealing with the same realities. The art of the author of *Job* is very different from that of the author of *Ecclesiastes*, just as the art of

Hawthorne is superficially different from that of Emerson, yet the intuitions of all four men may be directed towards a common centre.

What is the common centre? In this question is heard our cry for certainty, for valid tests of religious truth. Many of us demand a credal foundation for our lives, even though we have learned that no other major religion attaches as much importance to a creed as does Christianity. Men of other cultures may care as little as they like about religious truth—men of our culture want to *know*. In this search for assurance about the *true* and the *real*, we have developed theology and philosophy. We tell ourselves that we need to go beyond the crude concepts of Judea, the parables of Jesus, the rival claims of Rome and Canterbury, to the systematic thinking used so brilliantly by Aquinas and Hegel. Scriptures are never theological; they are the bases of theologizing, and must be brought to the bar of theology. Perhaps there can be appeal to an even higher court of philosophy, where ideas are tried before the three supreme justices: Metaphysics, Epistemology, Axiology. Or we may think of contemporary theology at its best as represented by Tillich; of contemporary philosophy at its best as represented by Whitehead. Then both courts, theology and philosophy, are on the same level, and their chief justices have equal rank and almost interchangeable jurisdictions.

To test the poetry of a Hebrew king and a Concord sage before the bar of philosophy is a just procedure. Man wishes to understand. This, literature can help him to do, but its help needs to be supplemented. To find the most systematic, and therefore the most reliable, answers to the questions raised by religious literature, we must go to the disciplines of rational thought: natural sciences, social studies, theology, philosophy. The insights of Moses need to be checked with the more carefully analyzed insights of Kant; what Emerson, an ex-Unitarian minister, wrote concerning the commodity of nature must be checked by the empiricism of Darwin.

All of this is true. But it is easy to exaggerate the value and completeness of systematic thought. In *The Last Puritan*, one of Santayana's characters remarks to Santayana:

> The trouble with you philosophers is that you misunderstand your vocation. You ought to be poets, but you insist on laying down the law for the universe, physical and moral, and are vexed with one another because your inspirations are not identical.[4]

Reading philosophy, one does often get the impression that its great systems are much like works of art. They are the products of the imagination; they speak symbolically of what man has in part discovered and in part created; they are occasionally described in moving language. In history they take their place among the most glorious creations of human

[4]G. Santayana, *The Last Puritan*. (London, 1935, p. 721.)

skill. Plato is one of the greatest philosophers partly because he rejected the systematic answering of all questions in favour of a freely imaginative exploration of some questions, and partly because he is the most artistic, even poetic, of the major philosophers.

Event and generalization, scripture and theology, art and philosophy —their interplay is enormously rewarding. Always the specific detail is needed to test the general statement. The world must always be available in a grain of sand; all knowledge, in a flower plucked from a crannied wall. And the specific detail is also needed to illustrate the general statement for clarity of communication. Teachers of rhetoric have long known that for Aristotle as for Aeschylus, generalization without illustration is vague; illustration without generalization is vain.

It may even be that for stating religious truth, the method of communication used by Aeschylus (or by any great author of *belles-lettres*) has a certain potential advantage over the method of the systematizing Aristotle. Perhaps the flexible symbolism and irony of the artist capture hydra-headed truth better than does the straightforward expository prose of the theologian and philosopher. Maybe for this quarry, particularly now when it does seem to have grown so multiform, the spreading buckshot of rich art has some advantages over the bullet of too direct a philosophy.

One further query about the relations of literature to theology and philosophy: Has the artist in fact become the theologian of contemporary culture? Does Faulkner give us our view of the nature of man? Do Madison Avenue executives fashion our intimate and ultimate concern? Do French ladies of genius and nineteen years teach us all we need to know about the theory of evil? Once upon time, great literature concentrated on exploring God's plan. The greatest literature to-day explores man's mind. Is the shift simply one of literary tastes, or also a shift of the dominant informal theology of literate men? Dante and Chaucer wrote of worlds in which the larger context of life was full of answers. Melville and O'Neill wrote of a world perplexed by questions. These generalizations are full of exceptions; literary history is full of countercurrents. Yet the modern intellectual does find the novel more important than the sermon, and, in his ignorance of any better theology, he is likely to accept that of Theodore Dreiser.

Literature may, then, serve to some extent as a scripture which creates both an awareness and an understanding of the larger context of life, though some men will always want to reflect theologically or philosophically on what they find in their scriptures. Two other major functions of scripture are to clarify our concepts of ethical terms and to exhort men to ethical behaviour.

As far as the clarification of *good* and *right* is concerned, the situation is the same as with *true* and *real*; the insights of artists should be studied

philosophically. Emerson suggests standards of self-reliance, self-realization, social responsibility; he presents a theory of evil and of freedom. To test these ideas adequately, we must weigh them against the systems developed by Aristotle and Spinoza, G. E. Moore and Sir David Ross. We must not expect final wisdom from Ross's *Foundations of Ethics*; neither must we expect it from Emerson's 'Uriel', or 'Ode, Inscribed to W. H. Channing'.

But 'Uriel' and the ode to Channing come fully into their own when we shift from the need of seeing clearly to the need of feeling sharply. Scripture can be endlessly valuable in exhorting men to do what is right, in motivating them to mould deeds in accordance with ideals. Whereas in the previous functions of scripture we were concerned with the literature of knowledge and its appeal to the intellect, we are now concerned with the literature of power and its appeal to the emotions. The Sermon on the Mount and the eloquence of Amos, the couplets of Pope and the quatrains of Lowell all serve this religious function of the written word. Other authors may have exhorted with more coherence than Emerson, but few have equalled the emphasis and vitality of his challenge to man's sluggard sense of duty.

The authors of the world's scriptures have not all agreed on just what it is that man ought to do. But they have, almost without exception, emphasized the dignity and worth of the individual, and particularly of that reasoning and conscientious part of him that Emerson would call divine. Both literature and religion rely on the similarities and dignity of men. Both of them, as much as any other human activities, remind us of the nobility men can achieve.

Literature may, as is suggested above, supply the theology for modern man. It may also supply his ethical standards and his ethical motivations. In some previous epochs, standards of behaviour as well as of belief were rigidly dictated by society. We breathe a freer air to-day, but also one in which freedom threatens to become anarchy. The philosopher and the preacher are strong allies against moral anarchy, but perhaps an even stronger ally is the writer, at least the great writer. His strong though subtle power to move men towards goodness is effectively described by Osgood:

> 'To train and mould an exceptional person into a man of good life and manners' . . . is not to be accomplished by reiteration of precept, but by weaving mysterious influences about his mind, starting ideas, sensitizing his feelings, enlarging his capacities, awakening and directing his imagination, opening his eyes to the invisible realities, and so through the influences of personified Justice, Self-Control, Decency, Courtesy, but above all Love, moving him to express himself not only with his lips, but in his life, to the enlightenment of the world around him. This is poetry plus.[5]

[5]Osgood, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

The personified virtues that Osgood mentions exist in the allegories of Spenser and Bunyan, but also, disguised to varying degrees, in Ibsen's plays and Cather's novels. Yet great exemplars are so undoubtedly powerful in motivating us to virtue that it is unwise to seek them only in allegory and other forms of fiction. The characters of allegory are too often bloodless; the characters of other fictions too often combine stupidity and vice with greatness. Effective exemplars can also be found in biographical and autobiographical literature. Some great personalities we may be fortunate to meet in our daily task. But for a full company of saints we must go to those books in which, through their own art and that of their biographers, one can get to know, to admire, and to imitate not only Jesus but John Woolman and Emerson—the suffering, loving, hoping, friend of Thoreau and Alcott. The masses of men are moved not so much by great arguments as by great personalities. Many congregations cannot be much affected by Spinoza's method of escaping human bondage, but they can respond to Jesus' kindness towards the woman taken in adultery.

Many works of literature present the highest ideals of profoundly spiritual men. If we recognize the validity of those ideals and yet are false to them, we are as reprehensible as when we are false to the ideals of any Bible which we have ascribed to God. The same is true with personalities. Whether one book makes us accept Jesus' life as the model we should take, or another makes us accept Emerson as that model, the betrayal of the model is a betrayal of the best we know. Moral slovenliness and treachery can be shown just as clearly through disrespect to the man who addressed Phi Beta Kappa at Harvard as through disrespect to the man who spoke to multitudes in Galilee.

In this function of literature and of religion—inspiring men to virtue—lay Emerson's chief reason for finding the theory of books noble. He had only minimal respect for literature as an end in itself:

> The purest literary talent appears as one time great, at another time small, but character is of a stellar and undiminishable greatness (*Character* iii, 90).

Nor did he have much respect for conventional theology or the forms of religion:

> 'I consider theology to be the rhetoric of morals. The mind of this age has fallen away from theology to morals. I conceive it an advance (*Character* x, 108).

Both literature and what is usually meant by religion found for Emerson their chief justification when they clarified ethical concepts and exhorted men to ethical behaviour.

The two remaining functions of scripture need not detain us long. The first is to provide myth and legend. Perhaps this function does not really deserve separate treatment. Myth is often used as an aid in explaining to others, or in understanding for oneself, the larger context of life.

Consequently we value in many books the stories of the incarnations of power: Jehovah in the Garden of Eden, Zeus on Olympus, Odin in Valhalla. The desire for such myths is not dead. It helped to form Melville's *Moby-Dick*, O'Neill's *Dynamo*, and many other works.

Legend, on the other hand, is often used as an aid in explaining and expanding the motivation to be derived from some great leader's example. Consequently we find many stories of the incarnation of goodness: Jesus in the manger, St. George slaying the dragon, Buddha forgiving the cook who caused his death. The use of such legends has not disappeared, though the omnipresence of the Associated Press reporter and of the television camera make it likely that such legends in contemporary literature will remain few.

Finally, scriptures provide the words for liturgy. Liturgy is intended, above all, to stimulate us to religious experience. In order to do so, it must remind us of our best understandings and commitments; it must express our dependence upon, and loyalty to, the otherness which most deeply concerns us. It must also demonstrate those traits of rhetoric most useful in ceremony: euphony, sublimity, pattern, terseness, familiarity, memorability, and universality.

* * * *

Seven major religious functions of literature are now before us; has our original problem grown any clearer? How noble is the theory of books? Instead of the single question, 'Can literature become man's religion?' we now have three questions: First, what is the nature of that literature? Mrs. Eddy's *Science and Health* appears to have succeeded as scripture; Poe's *Eureka* appears to have failed. Second, what is man's nature? One man's soul is saved by Emerson's essays; another's would be lost if that were our only book. Third, what is the nature of religion? If it is one simple thing, it may have no possible debt to literature; if it is a synoptic discipline and an experience of one's whole being, the debt to literature may be very great.

All of us use books. Many of us, because of religious commitments, will feel obliged to disagree with much that Emerson and others believe about the relationships between literature and religion. But perhaps all can agree with at least one idea which runs explicitly or implicitly through much of the foregoing argument. The idea is important, and our agreement about it, if we do agree, is also important. This is how Emerson expressed that idea in his address to American scholars:

> Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system. The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul (i, 89-90).

REVIEWS

YESTERDAY'S RESOLUTION*

This book consists of a Report and Appendices prepared by a Commission set up by the Archbishop of Canterbury to help the Bishops at Lambeth in their deliberations. The Report itself is brief, of some thirty pages, ably and directly written, and seems to bear the mark of one hand. It has attracted much attention in the Press by the most positive, but not the most important or radical, of its suggestions, a cautious advocacy of the use of contraceptives within wedlock to secure planned and smaller families. This is supported by a broad survey of the demographic conditions in many countries which confirms yet again that increase in population is continually and disastrously outpacing increases in resources. An Appendix quotes Abdul Khan, Minister for Food and Agriculture in Pakistan in 1953: 'The senseless race between increase of food and increase of population must not continue any longer'. In China, the Government estimate the increase at fifteen millions per annum. In India, the average per decade of population growth was 13.2% for 1941-1950, as against 2.2% in the United Kingdom for 1931-1950. The Report concludes:

> 'It would be presumptuous for the Church in the West . . . to seek to inhibit by religious sanction one of the two means, economic expansion and family limitation, by which under-developed areas may be able to save themselves from disaster.'

The cautious tone reflects the supposed predilection of the Bishops, who have twice at Lambeth condemned all use of contraceptives and who only in 1930 gave grudging permission in certain circumstances. The introduction to the Report approaches their Lordships with an air of self-conscious temerity in an Olde Englishe style. The pity is that the need to argue this stale case at length has obscured other matters in this Report and its Appendices that are more contemporary, more vital to the welfare and very survival of the family, and to which the Bishops should rather direct themselves. The breakdown of the clan structure, or of African polygamy; the isolation of the family in the new suburbia and the changed status of father and mother; women going to work; the collapse of the taboos against promiscuity; the implicit claim of a totalitarian state to treat the family as a means to its own power, and of a totalitarian church to multiply it to her own glory: these are some of the real problems. Save on one point, the Report is penetrating and radical.

> '[The medical] assault on disease and death has been made in the East, and in the Caribbean, before industrialization has really got under way—in advance therefore of the means of providing the enlarged and multiplying population with food and the barest necessities of life. . . .
> 'The education of women and girls which, relatively speaking, has only just begun, is probably the most disruptive force of all in matters of family life. . . .'

The spirit of the Report is held in one sentence:

> 'We cannot afford a moral theology which is so inflexible that it can make no provision for the needs of the bewildered mass of humanity such as is found in Africa today.'

**The Family in Contemporary Society.* (S.P.C.K. 1958. 229 pp. 10/6.)

The exception to the perspicacity of the Report is its total disregard of the political question, of the facts of power. This is a blind spot common to most vocal churchpeople to-day and manifest in the individual pronouncements by Church dignitaries on the H-bomb, Disarmament, or Peace. The economic development of backward countries, rightly urged in this Report, is no substitute for some working solution of a political question, as is so widely supposed. On the contrary, there is now evidence on all sides that such development but exacerbates the political struggle. If colonialism and Treaty Ports are dead, as this book assumes, under the guarantee of what new political sanction can developed countries be persuaded to invest in backward ones?

Four Appendices, three provided by Anglican Communions overseas, give some account of social conditions and some appraisement of the Church's task over nearly all the world. Much of this is culled from United Nations and other official reports and statistical digests. All of it is diffuse, too far-ranging and not free, especially in the American section, of the flaccid and otiose which beset so much that sociologists write.

> 'Nevertheless, the pressure of population on raw materials, and on food supplies in particular, must have an effect on the standard of living in economically under-developed countries where the population is increasing rapidly.' (The First Appendix.)

Little attempt has been made, particularly in the long First Appendix, to sort out and pose the questions to which the Bishops might profitably address themselves, other than the one question of contraceptives. Nonetheless, these Appendices have value if much labour is spent on reading them, and it would be worth while for busy Bishops and others to find the time.

The discussion of the questions raised for moral theology by the use of contraceptives is disappointing. In part the argumentation is repititive and rather anxiously didactic. The case against any use could surely have been more cogently pleaded than is here allowed. The conclusion has an air of the foregone:

> 'In spite of the manifest divergencies between these three treatments of the question (in this Appendix), there is a meeting-point of practical importance in the judgement that a conscientious decision to use contraceptives would in certain circumstances be justified.'

Even this guarded affirmation, which does not go much beyond Lambeth in 1930, is undermined for its social value, with which this Report is primarily concerned, by a second conclusion, that as a rule a Church should not help a State in its taking of measures calculated to reduce the size of families. Maybe the theologians did not read the Appendices, or were defeated by them.

In greater part, what disappoints is a certain lack of nerve, and incidentally therefore of clarity. Like some laggard battalion, these theologians advance backwards with infinite precaution on a position occupied by allied armies the day-before-yesterday. There are some hints of a critique of moral theology in this field, but in general the progress is by deduction from *a priori* concepts, such as the 'given' nature of coitus, but then curiously only within marriage, or the 'one-flesh unity' of man and wife. It is not only taken for granted that sexual intercourse belongs to the *esse* of marriage, a proposition in itself that could not bear the empirical test, but intercourse is nearly confounded with marriage and made the starting-point for all the discussions, save for a short and disconnected note on the three kinds of love distinguished by the Greek language. This over-concentration, very general in Christian ethics, on the sexual act in itself flows from the juridical

approach of Roman and Western Christian moralists, while there is an element of fascination derived from two milennia of Western moral theology conducted by celibates.

It is not enough for the more liberal Christian moralists, as in this book, to have recognised of recent years a 'relational' as well as a procreative function of intercourse. In fact, for human beings, except for the degenerate and deranged, intercourse is not the starting-point, but itself a function of something else. What is prior is a mental and emotional relationship upon which intercourse may be consequent. Even the prostitute must make a showing of affectionate consent if she is to ply her trade with success. It is the poets who have created love for us. It is in this quarter of the world of the spirit that moral theologians can profitably employ themselves, and we be spared much of the clinical details to be found in these pages and elsewhere. In this spiritual quarter they will indeed encounter the metaphysical, of which they speak in this book so hieratically, but it cannot be, of course, a metaphysic only of Christian marriage, nor necessarily of marriage at all, but, at this point, the metaphysic of sexual love itself.

No argument for the use of contraceptives, drawn from the metaphysic of love-making, could, unaided, only justify their use within wedlock. This is perhaps another reason why these theologians prefer to argue mostly about the concrete act, and from supposedly *a priori* notions of it into which they smuggle strictly monogamous marriage as part of a presupposition. This is to fail us and the Bishops at Lambeth. The use of contraceptives is widespread and cannot now be stopped. In the more highly civilized countries it has multiplied sexual intercourse before and outside wedlock from an early age, so that for large numbers of men and women alike intercourse is plainly not the traumatic experience, involving and transforming the whole personality, with which moral theologians have so far imagined they were dealing. A girl may talk to-day of 'having an experience'; for some groups of the population intercourse has become an almost casual accompaniment of friendliness. The Registrar General's birth statistics are evidence enough.

In this new situation, in this circumstance of what Aldous Huxley has called 'the rubber age', what is to be the teaching of the Anglican Communion on sexual conduct; on what argument is it to be based; how is it best to be disseminated; and what disciplines should the various Churches adopt? Does the Christian view of marriage, as we of a passing generation have preached it, require re-statement? Whatever the Christian view should be, what is the contemporary case for it? Here are questions closely touching the contemporary family to which the Bishops had rather been invited to address themselves than to the one question that is clearly posed by this Report and which the family has already answered for itself.

M. T. Dunlop

FATHERS*

This little book is a straightforward and valuable addition to Anglican devotional literature and fully deserves the Bishop of London's commendation. The writer faces up to a challenge. 'Our tradition of spirituality, of concentrated writing and thinking about the life of prayer,' he writes, 'has suffered many confusions in the course of the centuries: and for some people it is becoming increasingly difficult to use some even of the acknowledged classics of Christian spirituality of mediaeval times without uneasy concessions' (p. 9). This is all true, and it is refreshing to hear

*G. Lewis Phillips, *Flame in the Mind*, an introduction to some early Christian writings. (Longmans, 1957, pp. 118; 5/6.)

it put so bluntly. The separation between 'believing what is true' and 'loving what is good' has tended to make religion an activity apart from the rest of one's daily life. If we want 'to be whole Christian men we should study the works of those who were whole Christian men', and this leads on to the study of the early Fathers. In a series of lively sketches, the author introduces in turn Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria. The extracts from their works are well-chosen and translated into modern idiomatic English and the commentary is fresh and to the point. While not being in any way new or very profound, the author gives an interesting impression of the impact of the new religion on provincial life during the second century. The account of Justin's conversion taken from the *Dialogue with Trypho*, and the exchange between the Christians of Scilli and the Proconsul of Africa on July 17, 180, are particularly good. Here we can read the thoughts of ordinary provincials of the time, and to present Christianity as above all a popular movement and not merely a movement of theologians has obvious value to-day. At a time when many 'popular' works on the Fathers err on the side of the abstruse or the fanciful, it is pleasant to be able to welcome so clear, unpretentious and well-written a book.

W. H. C. Frend

SPIRITUALITY*

The title of this book might deceive, and it is important to understand what the writer means by it. The term 'mystical theology' denotes no more than a spirituality which expresses a doctrinal attitude (p. 7). It is to be remembered that the Eastern tradition has not made that somewhat sharp distinction between theology and mysticism, between the dogma of the Church and personal experience of the divine mysteries, which has been current in the West.

This book deals attractively with the fundamental Trinitarian doctrines, and, though orthodox, there is something original in the form of writing. Perhaps for us the chapter on 'Two Aspects of the Church' will most interest. 'The notion of a state of grace of which the members of the Church can be deprived, as well as the distinction between venial and mortal sins, are foreign to Eastern tradition' (p. 180) may well make the reader think he has misread the sentence. Of the cult of holy images it is said: 'An icon or cross does not exist simply to direct our imagination during our prayers. It is a material centre in which there reposes an energy, a divine force, which unites itself to human art' (p. 189). To the Orthodox, ritual symbolism is more than a representation addressed to the senses in order to remind us of spiritual realities.

The East is much more prone to and at home with symbolism than is the West, and this accounts for our difficulty in fully understanding and appreciating the Orthodox position. For instance, the following passage does not at once fit into Western liturgical thinking. 'The reading of the Gospel, the descent of the presiding bishop from his throne, the expulsion of the catechumans and the penitents, and the closing of the doors of the church, symbolize the events of the Last Judgment, the second coming of the Lord, the separation of the elect from the damned, and the passing away of the visible world' (p. 190). Does the East see better into the mysteries of the Faith, or does it read more into them?

It is important that East and West should understand one another, no less in matters of Faith than of politics, and Western Churchmen should read what the

*Vladimir Lossky: *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*. (James Clarke; 16/-.)

best Eastern Churchmen are writing and should try to grasp their theological and liturgical outlook. So to grasp is not always easy; these Orthodox writers have no economy of words, and some of their phrases are not very familiar to us of the West. But it is our duty to understand them, and learn from them, and this the present book will fully enable us to do.

This book was first published in Paris, in 1944, and has now been translated by a group from the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius. As most people know, this Fellowship has as its main object the promotion of understanding between Eastern and Western Christians. So it is most right that this book should be made available to the English reading public, and we hope that it will increase our understanding. We wonder how many similar books from the West are being made available for members of the Orthodox Church, and fear that it may be small. Yet such a two-way traffic is essential if there is to be full understanding in preparation for what we all pray will one day occur.

PATRICK COWLEY

NEWMAN AND THE IDEA OF DEVELOPMENT

The strange personality of John Henry Newman continues to perplex and fascinate and, apparently, of the making of many books about him there is no end. Latest among them is a scholarly work by the Master of Selwyn, *From Bossuet to Newman*.* The sub-title of the book, 'The Idea of Doctrinal Development', indicates where Dr. Chadwick's special interest lies—in Newman's famous *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. Bossuet is his starting point because Bossuet is the classic exponent of the opposite *semper eadem* outlook which will admit *no* development in doctrinal orthodoxy, only a growing explication of what the Church has always consciously and continuously believed. For a century or more, says Dr. Chadwick, his work was one of the sharpest weapons in the armoury of Catholic apologetic ('I read, I applauded, I believed,' declared Edward Gibbon), but even in his own lifetime Bossuet's position was being assailed by Jesuit logicians in Spain and elsewhere, and the rise of historical criticism was soon to expose its patent untenability. Hence the temptation to remove Christian doctrine from the probings of the historian altogether and rest it upon the authority of the Church alone. This was the line taken by W. G. Ward; was it the line which Newman pursued in his *Essay* as well? Despite the fact that Newman himself put 'Write it historically' at the front of the notebook in which material for the *Essay* was to be compiled, the latter has indeed appeared to be rather an escape from history to such diverse critics as J. B. Mozley, Lord Acton and John Oman. Nor was the *Essay* greeted with much sympathy, on its first publication, by the pundits of the Roman Church to which Newman has just made his submission.

> 'Newman had come into the Roman Catholic Church—had he come on his own terms? . . . His Person they (the Roman theologians) welcomed with warmth and sympathy, his thought perplexed and sometimes frightened them. "The Roman theologians," wrote Father Ignatius Ryder later, "saw Newman to be a formidable engine of war on their side, but they were distinctly aware that they did not thoroughly understand the machinery. And so they came to think, some of them, that it might perhaps one day go off of itself or in the wrong direction." ' (p. 169).

**From Bossuet to Newman*, by Owen Chadwick. (C U.P., 1957; 25/-.)

For one thing, of course, Newman had not been brought up to share the Thomist's attitude towards reason; on the contrary, torn as he was between credulity and scepticism, he feared and distrusted it. The ghost of Hume, Dr. Chadwick remarks, was always just over his shoulder; his new friends at Rome were haunted by no such apparition, and there was the language difficulty as well. In fact at one point Newman had some misgivings lest his *Essay* should be placed upon the Index—misgivings which were hardly set at rest by a ludicrous French translation which mistook Mosheim for a Moslem, the faithful departed for those fallen from grace, and Newman himself for the editor of *The Times*!

Nevertheless, when he came to republish his book many years later, 'he was claiming for it,' says Dr. Chadwick, 'a new and rather more accepted status. . . . He was serenely confident in its acceptability as a permissible speculation for a Catholic' (p. 188). This confidence might have been disturbed by the *Lamentabili* decree of 1907 which maintains that revelation ended with the death of the last apostle, but, for his own part, Dr. Chadwick forms the conclusion that so far from Newman being 'the inventor of the supreme dodge to get rid of historical criticism altogether . . . there is a genuine appeal to history in his version of the theory of development' (p. 194).

> 'In a way Newman was a prodigy. He was a prodigy because he came to believe in historical development without also believing in the liberal philosophies of development. This was what made the *Essay* possible as a contribution to Roman doctrine' (p. 195).

That Newman was indeed a prodigy there can surely be no doubt, whatever we may think of his thought and his theology, and whether or not we agree with Dr. Chadwick in the conclusions he reaches about him. Yet the fact remains that unless we share with Newman in his idea of an infallible Church, which prompted him to formulate his idea of development, the latter can hardly touch us very closely.

D. L. Scott

A NEW EUSEBIUS*

This is an extremely valuable piece of work. For some years Dr. B. J. Kidd's *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church* has been out of print, and a replacement has been needed badly. Mr. Stevenson's book does this, and a great deal more besides. There are no less than 319 extracts from ancient authors in translation covering the whole of Church history down to the death of Constantine. There is a useful commentary on some of the chief sources and, what students will find most helpful, a clearly laid out chronological synopsis in which secular and Church history are set out in a single framework.

Altogether the scope of this work is much wider than its predecessor's. The critical notes at the end of each extract are an excellent innovation, and there is a refreshing touch about some of the headings. The 'Incompetence of Zephyrinus' is balanced by the 'Disorder of the Heretics'. In addition, Stevenson has been able to use sources which were still unknown in Kidd's day. Thus, it is now possible to introduce the student to Mani through the latter's own writings. The selection of the 154th *Principle* (*Kephalaion*) throws an interesting light both on how the progress of the Church during the third century impressed an outsider, and Mani's own vast pretensions. Perhaps in view of the importance of Manichaeism as a force both in the eastern and western halves of the Empire in the fourth century, even

**Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church to A.D. 337*, ed. J. Stevenson. (S.P.C.K., 1957; pp. 427 and maps; 21/-.)

more space could have been given to this topic. One misses, too, a reference to the newly-discovered Gnostic works such as the Gospel of Truth or the Letter to Rheginos. It might have been better to have quoted these instead of deriving an account of Gnosticism wholly from Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Tertullian.

Undoubtedly the strength of this work lies in the picture it presents of the Christian world from 300–337. Here the author is completely in his element. There is a mastery of the material and an assurance which carries the reader through the Great Persecution to Constantine's religious revolution and on to the emergence of Athanasius in a single sweep. A connected narrative could hardly be more vivid. The reader is given a first-rate introduction to the history of the early Church. Some of these selections are particularly interesting; Lactantius, for instance, unexpectedly comments on the comparative ineffectiveness of Tertullian and Cyprian outside their immediate following, and there is the Gallic Panegyrist's description of Constantine's vision of Apollo and Victoria in 310. The Emperor's adhesion to 'Sol Invictus', as well as the Christian God between 313–324, becomes intelligible. The editor's sureness of touch, imagination and accuracy of translation have produced an outstanding piece of work. Scholar and student will be in his debt for a long time to come.

W. H. C. Frend

BARTH ON ELECTION*

Another stride forward in the apprehension of Dr. Barth's theology is now open to the English reader. The present weighty 'half-volume' comprises the second part of his doctrine of God. (Eight subsequent part-volumes have already appeared, one of them in English.[1]) The preceding half-volume having dealt with our knowledge of God and his being and nature, this part of the work goes on to God's activity, which can be summed up in the word 'election'.

Like Luther and Calvin, Barth follows St. Paul in making the doctrine of election a cardinal point in his beliefs about God: 'Election is that which takes place at the very centre of the divine self-revelation' (p. 59); but, unlike the reformers, and in particular unlike the immediate successors of Calvin, he endeavours to 'begin with Jesus Christ and not with general principles' (p. 4), whereas they began with both. English students of theology are likely to have met the quotation:

> 'God may have other words for other worlds;
> But for this world the Word of God is Christ.'

Of these lines the former would to Barth be meaningless in itself and highly dangerous in what it suggests. To him God is wholly like Jesus Christ, not partly like him, even hypothetically, nor like him as regarded from one point of view and perhaps not from another. 'We should not have learned to say "God" correctly if we thought it enough to say only "God" ', for all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Jesus Christ. The consistent application of this principle is the key with which Barth opens up new insights into the doctrine of God and of his relations with man.

Thus election, which is the work of God's grace, the expression of his attributes or 'perfections', is first 'self-election in favour of another' (p. 10); and so 'the truth of the doctrine of predestination is . . . the sum of the Gospel'. Barth departs from classical Calvinism in showing election and predestination to be a 'Yes' rather than a 'Yes and No': the 'Book of life' has no 'death-column' in it (p. 16) (though this certainly does

*_Church Dogmatics_, Vol. II, 'The Doctrine of God'. Part 2. By Karl Barth. Translated from the German by G. W. Bromiley, J. C. Campbell, Iain Wilson, J. Strathearn McNab, Harold Knight and R. A. Stewart. (T. & T. Clark, pp. xi+806. Price 55/-. 1958.)

[1] See _The Modern Churchman_, October 1957, p. 148.

not imply that there is no such thing as judgement or that perdition is impossible). This positive and 'joyful' doctrine has been made possible by digging down to the foundation of Scriptural Revelation, where we find, not abstract generality, but particularity qualified by Jesus Christ. 'Before Him and without Him and beside Him God does not . . . elect or will anything' (p. 94). Barth concludes, therefore, that God's primal decision was not the *decretum absolutum*, unqualified and inscrutable, which it was the error of so many earlier theologians to postulate; but the electing God and elected man are to be seen from the beginning in Christ.

The doctrine is worked out in detail under the headings, 'The Election of Jesus Christ', 'The Election of the Community', and 'The Election of the Individual'. There are many illuminating excursuses into the history of doctrine, in which certain passages will be of special interest to Calvinists and students of Calvinism; but Barth ranges from Athanasius to the present day, citing Aquinas, Augustine and Luther in that order of frequency after Calvin. In the longest section, that on 'The Election of the Individual', the author teaches that only in Jesus Christ is it truly seen what elect man and what rejected man are. God loves both in him. Thus, although in the light of Biblical revelation the Church will not preach universal salvation, neither will it preach 'a powerless grace of Jesus Christ or a wickedness of man which is too great for it. But without any weakening of the contrast, and also without any arbitrary dualism, it will preach the overwhelming power of grace and the weakness of human wickedness in face of it' (p. 477). Moreover, the elect and the rejected belong together. The rejected man, 'who isolates himself from God by resisting his election as it has taken place in Jesus Christ', bears reluctant witness to the truth, and his determination (or description) is the 'necessary reverse side' of the determination of the elect (p. 454). The rejected 'is not apart from nor alongside the elect', but with him. And in some senses the elect are rejected and the rejected elect (p. 506). Now, without for a moment claiming that one has in one's sling a stone which could take the giant of Basle unawares, one may suggest that a development of his teaching here might help towards the discovery of the *Anknüpfungspunkt*, the 'point of contact' between the mind of unregenerate man and the Gospel, which Barth has always so subtly and strenuously denied to exist.

There are many passages of Biblical exegesis, some of them lengthy. Most of these are highly important and need to be read for an understanding of the author's mind and argument. We may perhaps single out especially the exposition of Romans 9-11 under the heading of 'The Election of the Community'. In the section after this, however, we find an extravagant example of the Barthian exegesis of Scripture. It consists of fifty-five pages on the witness to Christ in the Old Testament with reference to Election and Rejection. Whereas the material collected here might provide an admirable course of sermons with many suggestions for meditation, the typological ingenuity with which it is treated seems to at least one reader to lack the balance needed to give it a permanent place in a discussion of dogmatics. Barth's method here is to construct a pattern of interpretation of an Old Testament theme such as first century Christians might have been likely to find convincing, although it is not explicit in the New Testament, and then to lay it down as universally valid to-day. He claims, for instance, that many of the kings of Israel and Judah, in various details of their election and rejection, point to Christ, and that this is 'not merely possible but necessary as the last word in the exegesis of these passages' (p. 389). One can only reply that, while one agrees wholeheartedly that Christ is the fulfilment of the Old Testament, the attempt to elaborate this fulfilment in first century thought-forms which lack complete Biblical substantiation savours less of Biblicism than of antiquarianism. Barth himself is understandably on the defensive about this exposition,

writing more than once to the following effect: 'And if there are those who for any reason cannot accept our "if", i.e. the presupposition of the apostolic exegesis of these passages—very well, then, let them show us a better key to the problem of the elect king of the Books of Samuel!' (p. 393). But they may think that the way in which they ought to put questions to the Old Testament is other than this.

The chapter on 'The Election of God' is followed by a somewhat shorter one on 'The Command of God', which is also most illuminating and suggestive. Barth first shows that Ethics is a task of the doctrine of God, because, in the covenant of God with man, the first element is election and the second is command. As we may well have expected, Barth does not begin with 'ethics in general', which has very little relevance to 'theological ethics' as he understands it; but 'the Christian doctrine of God . . . is the answer to the ethical question' (p. 515). The doctrine of God's command is as Christological as that of his election: 'Divine ethics' concerns 'the good of the command issued to Jesus Christ and fulfilled by Him. There can be no question of any other good in addition to this'; but upon it all other goods depend. The subject, says Barth, does not lend itself to systematic treatment: he may, perhaps, allow us to call his method existential; for, since 'God is not dead in a rigid unity . . . we have to pursue the knowledge of his command in such a way that we try to understand and bring out its relations as stations on a road which we have to tread, and the unity of which we shall know only as we tread it'. Therefore ethics will come 'in a concluding chapter to each of the different parts of dogmatics. In the present instance this means that 'general' ethics' forms the last chapter of the doctrine of God' (p. 551).

The ethical command is treated as the 'Claim of God', the 'Decision of God', and the 'Judgement of God'. Under the second of these headings the author seeks to show that personal encounter has always been more fundamental than legal formula. 'The divine law in the Bible is always a concrete command', and codes are not typical. Even the codes, seen in their historical context, are not illustrations of general ethical principles, but rather 'the solemnly proclaimed self-qualifications of God, and at the same time, and by the fact that they are revealed, the solemnly proclaimed qualities of his own, of those with whom he has resolved to speak and whom he has called to hearken to his voice . . . the presuppositions on both sides' (p. 683). The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount are expounded in this light.

Although one may question details in Barth's work and some of his presuppositions, one is profoundly grateful for his massive achievement. Here is more new light than will be absorbed by the general mind of the Church for many years. This book, moreover, is not only helpful to the study of doctrine but is highly edifying, in the wholly good sense in which St. Paul uses the word. It is a challenge to prayer and action.

The question of Barth's 'verbosity' has lately been reopened, but in this volume we find little substance in the accusation. To say all that he has said and that was worth saying required a considerable number of words. He defines things by talking round them, and the subject-matter probably makes this necessary. On the other hand we must admit that to read all the volumes from beginning to end would be a daunting task and one for which few could believe that they had the time. Otto Weber has produced with the author's blessing a brief summary of the first three volumes;[2] and one may profitably use this as a guide for finding passages in the original work which one may wish to consult. By starting in this way one may find eventually that one has read the whole Dogmatik.

Ripon Hall J. F. B. Goodwin

[2] Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics: An Introductory Report*. By Otto Weber. Translated by Arthur C. Cochrane. Lutterworth Press. Price 16/-. 1953.

LORD ELTON'S TRACT FOR OUR TIMES*

The story is told of a certain John Smith who passed through the pearly gates and was given a house which overlooked the main street of the celestial city. A little while afterwards he was surprised to see the street all beflagged and preparations being made for some obviously important occurrence. On asking the reason, Smith was told that the arrival of a bishop was imminently expected. He could not think that this would be so unusual an event as to merit such a welcome, and he was only further mystified when it was pointed out to him that it was *a Church of England bishop* who was coming. 'But don't you see?' his informant explained, 'he'll be the first one we've had up here for the past four hundred years!' The story is of course an unpardonable slander upon our Church of England, but if it were true the bishop in question might conceivably have been the saintly Edward King of Lincoln. Lord Elton, whose grandfather was King's first vicar and lifelong friend, has written a new book about him, not so much (as he says) as a biography but as an exploration of sainthood in face of 'the macabre ignorance, common among contemporary literary prophets, of the very rudiments of ethics and theology' (p. 11). The result is a tract for the times which registers an effective protest against 'the modern pantheist poring over a shapeless assemblage of syncretistic aphorisms' and deriving from them 'an agreeable glow of moral fervour . . . while he continues to devote himself whole-heartedly to increasing his private income and humiliating those whom he dislikes' (p. 65).

Unfortunately King just fails to come alive in Lord Elton's pages, possibly because Lord Elton has been a little too anxious to shew that King possessed all the traditional marks of sanctity, and one could wish that he had made more explicit use of the unpublished materials available to him. Without doubt King was a very saintly man, but I suspect that that by itself would not account for all his influence; rather the secret lay in the simple fact that here was a saint for whom nothing was too small or inconsequential to be worth his while, and who (as Lord Elton observes) was never in a hurry. Thus, as a Canon of Christ Church he was ready to hear the simple little confession of Dr. Pusey's maidservant, though Pusey protested that it was a shocking waste of his time and energy. Similarly as Bishop of Lincoln he would spend long hours travelling by tedious branch lines to confirm a handful of ploughboys and be well content to have done so. No other Bishop of Lincoln, for example, is known to have visited the tiny village of Creeton either before or since; but King held a confirmation there, and I well remember, when I was rector of the parish, how my churchwarden would describe that still memorable occasion.

Lord Elton has allowed one or two slips to remain uncorrected. Pusey could hardly have been writing in 1887 (p. 43), seeing that he died in 1882; 'the early nineteenth-century Bishop' on p. 45 is apparently Bishop Butler who died in 1752; and the date of King's primary Charge is given as 1866 (p. 79)—nineteen years before his consecration as bishop.

It would, however, be ungracious to end on a critical note. *Edward King and our times* is both stimulating and devotional—a very proper but none too frequent combination—a good book for Lenten reading. One hopes that it may reach a wider public than most devotional books are likely to do and that it may challenge some of those who are living in the spiritual vacuum that is so characteristic of our times.

D. L. Scott

**Edward King and our Times*, by Lord Elton. (Bles, February 1958; 12/6.)

CHURCH DIVINITY SCHOOL OF THE PACIFIC LIBRARY

DR. MICKLEM LOOKS BACK

The Box and the Puppets,* its author tells us, is not an autobiography; it deals with some of the things he has seen and heard, but 'with what I have thought it is much less concerned' (p. 8). One cannot help regretting this limitation; in particular we should like to know more of the reasons which lead Dr. Micklem to abandon the theological liberalism of his youth, and of the stages by which he did so. Altogether, in fact, however praiseworthy their modesty, these reminiscences do tend to skim rather tantalizingly over the surface of events; but they are quite fascinating none the less. Especially so is the chapter about the Church in Germany before Hitler's war and Dr. Micklem's own highly dangerous relations with it.

In these days, when the reaction against liberalism in theology has become so commonplace, it is surprising to learn how suspect Dr. Micklem was in Congregationalist circles a mere twenty years ago, and that C. J. Cadoux, of honoured memory, 'was encouraged to feel that he had been appointed to Mansfield as a faithful watchdog to keep an eye on me' (p. 82). He and Micklem 'nearly broke one another's hearts', and his appointment at Mansfield 'dimmed the happiness of the last years of his life and most of my years as Principal' (p. 81).

But of Anglican liberals, Dr. Micklem appears to retain happier memories—of his tutor at New College, for example, Dr. Hastings Rashdall, of whom he recounts the following story:

> 'He was gently rebuking me as a Nonconformist for desiring the Disestablishment of the Church of England. Were it not for the Establishment and therewith lay appointment to ecclesiastical office, there would be, he said, no chance of preferment for such men of liberal thought as he was. I am sure he was right, and, indeed, one of the reasons why I no longer hanker after Disestablishment is that under such conditions the Church of England would, I fear, fall almost completely under the control of clerics' (pp. 38-39).

Again, there is this delightful recollection of B. H. Streeter:

> 'He says Christianity is in a bad way. Karl Barth has shown that we know nothing about God, and *Formgeschichte* that we know nothing about Jesus Christ. The residuum is not satisfactory. As for *Formgeschichte*—if two paragraphs concur, we may clearly detect the hand of an editor; if they do not concur, we have the plainest evidence of interpolation' (pp. 52-3).

Streeter, Dr. Micklem adds, was a formidable theologian because of his sterling qualities of common-sense—a verdict which could no doubt be justly applied to the writer of *The Box and the Puppets* himself.

D. L. Scott

**The Box and the Puppets*, by Nathaniel Micklem. (Bles, 1957; 13/6.)

THE LAW AND THE SANCTITY OF LIFE*

This book concerns the beginnings and last stages of human life and the teachings of both religion and science concerning them. The earlier chapters remind one of Bishop Barry's caustic comment that 'the one really formidable argument against the truths of the Christian religion is the record of the Christian Church'. While frankly admitting that 'the change in moral outlook from wholesale infanticide and reckless slaughter was very largely, if not entirely, the work of the Church', the author devotes much attention to the harm done by the arbitrary rules invented or adopted by ecclesiastics. He quotes Sir Lawrence Jones' terse statement 'that

**The Sanctity of Life and the Criminal Law*, by Glanville Williams. (Faber & Faber; 30/-.)

there seems to be something about the human reproduction system which throws the ecclesiastical mind off its balance' and gives ample evidence in its support.

'Religion,' says the author truly, 'rather easily runs to a form of masochism and the great advantage of celibacy was supposed to be its denial of the desires of the flesh.' He holds St. Augustine responsible for 'the notion that venereal pleasure without the accompanying risk of procreation is sinful', and shows how the Roman Church of to-day, while retaining the principle, has struggled to free its members from some of its practical effects. Though the control of conception by means of the so-called safe period was, the Professor writes, 'explicitly denounced by St. Augustine', it is freely advocated by some Roman Catholic writers to-day. The fact that opposition to scientific methods of family planning leads to widespread poverty and to the birth of countless unwanted children are well brought out in this book. The view that 'forethought with regard to sexual functions is an interference with Providence' leads to the conclusion that Providence 'has apparently planned that deformed and moronic children shall be born'. The same applies to children in whom a feeling of being unwanted by their parents generates criminal activities.

Chapters are devoted to sterilization, abortion, and to the highly modern problem of artificial insemination. In each the general legal principles are discussed and the miserable results of 'this morbid, guilt-ridden attitude towards sex, which persisted in Christian thinking until our own generation' are frankly exposed.

So far as the last stages of life are concerned, there are valuable chapters on suicide and euthanasia. Nearly all countries have ceased to regard suicide as a crime, but English law, contrary to that existing in Scotland, has never taken this step. Again the Professor lays the blame on St. Augustine. He quotes Dr. Hastings Rashdall's refusal to absolve the suicide from moral guilt, but denunciation of moral sin is different from persistence in maintaining criminality, as discussion on the recent Wolfenden report has made clear. About euthanasia he quotes a Roman Catholic writer who maintained that agony before death 'is part of the sacrifice that God demands for the sins and faults of life. . . . Some suffering is necessary. God knows how much each man needs'. There seems to be something also in the process of dying which throws the ecclesiastical mind off its balance. Professor Williams agrees with the critics of the Euthanasia Bill of 1936 and puts forward his own counter proposals. But he agrees also that there are no votes in Law Reform. It is a strange comment on our modern democratic methods that such vital problems as those dealt with in this book, as also those concerning marriage and divorce, are consistently neglected by our rulers.

This stimulating book deserves to be widely read, particularly among clergy, doctors and lawyers, but also by the more intelligent sections of our public.

CLAUD MULLINS

FROM A COUNTRY RECTORY*

Hazlitt remarks somewhere, a little sourly, that 'the two rarest things to be met with are good sense and good nature'. It must be even rarer, then, to find both combined with a sense of humour verging on the sardonic, as they are deliciously combined in this short volume. These 'pieces', as their author calls them, are neither essays nor short stories, nor are they mere reminiscences in the usual rambling sense. They are very carefully written, with great restraint and skill, and many of them

*_From a Country Rectory_, by J. K. Nettlefold. Ed. J. Burrow & Co. Ltd., Cheltenham. (Price 10/6.)

might be described as extended versions of the form of writing which the late Logan Pearsall Smith called 'Trivia', each with the stamp of its author's tastes and distastes clearly and indelibly upon it.

Clerical Trivia is not always entertaining to the civilized mind—we are not all Sydney Smiths—but the cautious reader need have no fears in this case; he will find nothing 'parsonic' here. If he has already met two of these pieces in the *Modern Churchman*, he will be glad to read them again; if he has not yet become acquainted with Mr. Nettlefold's pen, there is a new pleasure in store for him. The layman (and laywoman) will discover what the parson of independent mind thinks about such diverse matters as 'doing the flowers', the nuisance-value of graveyards, the perils of eloquence in extempore prayer, and the general inability of us all to take in the gist of notices. The parson will find here some of his own most secret thoughts forthrightly expressed. The majority of these pieces could only have been written by one who knows the life of an English country parish from the inside, and who is critically, though most tolerantly, aware of the view *into* the country rectory, as well as the view from it. The book concludes with two sketches of visits to Ireland, and a fine description, in quite another mood, of the play 'Everyman', at Salzburg.

Readers should specially appreciate the description of Mr. Bloor, the Unitarian minister, on p. 67:

> 'His tolerance was a fine thing; it was not mere indifference. He liked people to be themselves and different from everyone else. He enjoyed their variousness. He took them as he found them, and had no desire to improve them. Because God had made them different, it was not for him to try to remake them according to the pattern he preferred. This is the respect we owe to each other, as God's children. "Honour all men", said St. Peter.'

R. C. Tait